

EVALUATION OF A DUAL CAREER
COUPLES GUIDANCE PROGRAM

BY

DAVE WORTLEY

A DISSERTATION PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

1986

This dissertation is dedicated to
Maryann and Seth.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This project could not have been completed without the help of a number of people. Each of my committee members (Drs. Ellen Amatea, Larry Loesch, Peggy Fong, and Constance Shehan) sacrificed his or her time to read, edit, and provide support in order that I could complete this dissertation and finally graduate. My chairman, Dr. Amatea, has been particularly helpful in this regard, as well as having provided me much support and encouragement through my protracted tenure as a graduate student. I would also like to extend special thanks to Dr. Harold Riker, who was originally a member of this committee but couldn't wait for me to finish before he retired. His patience, confidence, kindness, and nurturing have been gifts that I will not forget.

The faces of my parents, friends, and the many teachers who have helped me to this point, I will carry forward with me. Many people have believed in me and my abilities when I would not. Their confidence has made a difference. I thank all of them.

Most specifically I thank my wife, Maryann, without whose love, encouragement, and technical assistance this would not have been completed. Her confidence and understanding have sustained me through many things--the frustrations of this project included.

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Abstract of Dissertation to
the Graduate School of the University of Florida
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

EVALUATION OF A DUAL CAREER COUPLES GUIDANCE PROGRAM

By

Dave Wortley

August, 1986

Chairperson: Ellen Amatea

Major Department: Counselor Education

The purpose of this study was to evaluate a short-term intervention program for dual career couples. The program was designed to expand couples' awareness of the predicaments experienced in a dual career relationship, to help them clarify their work and family role values and commitments, and to develop their communication and decision-making skills. The program was delivered by trained counselors to a total of 40 dual career couples in the University of Florida and surrounding Gainesville community.

A randomized control group pretest-posttest design was utilized. Dual career couples volunteered to participate in the program through various university, community, civic and church affiliated organizations.

The treatment group and gender were the independent variables. The dependent variables were 1) couples' work and

The treatment group and gender were the independent variables. The dependent variables were 1) couples' work and family role expectations or salience, as measured by the Life Role Salience Scales; 2) their attitudes regarding the equality of their marital communication patterns, as measured by the Marital Communication Inventory; and 3) perceptions of change in their satisfaction with their interpersonal relationship, as measured by the Relationship Change Scale.

Analysis of couples' responses on the Life Role Salience Scale and the Marital Communication Inventory revealed no significant differences between experimental and control group subjects ($p \leq .05$). There were also no significant differences noted between male and female subjects nor significant interaction between treatment and sex on these measures. Although, no significant difference by sex or interaction by treatment and sex were recorded on the Relationship Change Scale, a significant difference between treatment and control groups subjects ($p \leq .05$) was reported, with treatment group subjects reporting significantly more positive change than the controls during posttesting.

A series of related *t* tests were conducted to determine, as a post hoc analysis, those Relationship Change Scale items demonstrating a significant difference by group.

Items in which treatment groups subjects reported changes concerned changes in 1) how they felt they were perceived by their spouse, 2) their self-perceptions and self-understanding, 3) their perceptual accuracy and listening skills, 4) their ability to constructively handle disagreement, and 5) their general relationship. A discussion of results, their implications and limitations, and recommendations for further research are offered.

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

Scope of the Problem

The proportion of people choosing to follow a dual career pattern in which both husband and wife maintain a commitment to a career and a couple/family relationship has risen steadily over the past 10 years (Hershman & Levenson, 1979; Katz, 1978). For such individuals their career typically requires a high degree of commitment of personal time, energy, and training; is highly salient personally; and has a continuous developmental quality where advances in responsibility, power, pay, and status are accrued over time (Rapoport & Rapoport, 1976). It is estimated that the proportion of dual career marriages in the general population of the United States has increased at the rate of approximately 7 percent per year since 1970 (Rice, 1979).

Although work and family traditionally have been treated as separate areas of research interest (Ridley, 1973), the interface between the working lives and the personal lives of people in this society is of growing

concern to families, researchers, managers, and policy makers. One reason for this concern is that the proportion of married women in the labor force has increased substantially in the last several decades, indicating that many women expect to combine family life with work outside the home (Ladewig & White, 1984).

Rather than working primarily for added income, both husband and wife have high achievement aspirations and seek to exercise their fullest capacities in their respective occupations (Scanzoni & Scanzoni, 1981). Even though dual career families currently are a minority, Scanzoni and Scanzoni (1981) suggested that it is a lifestyle that may represent the wave of the future. Because of the enormous implications for family life and for the larger society, it seems important that greater research efforts be devoted to the dual career family (Berardo, 1981).

Many social indicators suggest that the number of dual career couples in this country will continue to increase. Larger numbers of women are preparing for careers by extending their education. Since it has been found that professional women are more likely to marry professional men (Feldman, 1973), it is expected that the dual career pattern will become more and more prevalent (Rapoport & Rapoport, 1978). According to many writers, contemporary professional couples bring not

only an uncharted set of occupational problems, but also a new set of psychological and philosophical constructs to the traditional marriage structure, including a preoccupation with independence and achievement (Hall & Hall, 1979; Parker, Peltier, & Wolleat, 1981; Rapoport & Rapoport, 1976). The traditional family marker events, e.g., the age of marriage or the birth of the first child, even the nature and timing of the midlife period of reevaluation, seem to be altered by the dual career couple/family process (Wilke, 1979).

Research on the dual career family pattern has focused on dual career families from the psychological (Burke & Weir, 1976; Johnson & Johnson, 1980; Rapoport & Rapoport, 1971, 1978; St. John-Parsons, 1978) and organizational (Hall & Hall, 1979; Holmstrom, 1972; Hunt & Hunt, 1977) perspectives. The first view examines issues, trends, and dilemmas of dual career couples as a divergent form of family development; the second analyzes the problems of matching the needs of the couple as a unit to the individual's career growth and the needs of the organization.

Psychologically oriented research reports describe the pressures and stresses, as well as many benefits. Problems of role overload have repeatedly been documented in the literature (Johnson & Johnson, 1977; Rapoport & Rapoport, 1976, 1978). Discrepancies between personal norms for career and family role performance and social/environmental sanctions frequently created "normative dilemmas" for participants of

this family form. Sex role and personal identity conflicts have also been reported frequently by dual career participants attempting to merge personal definitions of career and family roles with sociocultural definitions of what is intrinsically masculine or feminine (Rapoport & Rapoport, 1976; Shaevitz & Shaevitz, 1979). Finally, role cycling dilemmas and the restriction of social support systems are commonly cited sources of stress for dual career participants (Lein, 1979; Rapoport & Rapoport, 1978).

With the growth of this family form and the increasing recognition of its inherent stressors, specific attitudes and strategies have been reported for coping successfully with the pressures of this lifestyle (Hall & Hall, 1979; Parker, Peltier, & Wolleat, 1981; Price-Bonham & Murphy, 1980; Rapoport & Rapoport, 1969, 1976; Shaevitz & Shaevitz, 1979). Such attitudes and strategies seem to be either individual or couple based. The need to combine individual and couple based coping strategies has been widely documented in the literature on dual career couples (Hall & Hall, 1979; Parker, Peltier, & Wolleat, 1981).

Successful individually based strategies for reducing or at least managing the stresses of this lifestyle were those of 1) increasing one's awareness of the typical issues and common stressor situations faced by dual career couples so that one can be better able to generate adaptive alternatives (Rapoport & Rapoport, 1978); 2) employing a "stress

optimization" mentality, in which stress is acknowledged as inevitable and preferable to the stresses of alternative lifestyles (Bebbington, 1973, Poloma, 1972); establishing priorities among and between roles (Rapoport & Rapoport, 1978); 4) compartmentalizing or focusing on roles at different times (Shaevitz & Shaevitz, 1979); 5) compromising of personal standards; (Rice, 1979); and 6) utilizing personal relaxation techniques such as meditation and physical exercise to develop a greater taking care of self mentality (Hall & Hall, 1979).

The couple centered strategies for effective coping mentioned by dual career theorists involved more complex processes. One critical element in the successful management of stress was the presence of a "helping component" in the couple relationship characterized by open communication, empathy, emotional reassurance, support, and sensitivity to each other's feelings (Burke & Weir, 1976; Hall & Hall, 1979). Interviewing both dual career and dual working couples, Rapoport and Rapoport (1971, 1978) reported that a significant number of the couples emphasized the need for partners to possess effective interpersonal skills so that communication and decision-making processes were more efficient and equitable. Parker, Peltier, and Wolleat (1981) in their review of essential dual career coping elements, discussed the need for the couple to communicate feelings honestly and to develop a basic sense of trust and mutual respect.

A second critical coping element described by couples is the frequent use of explicit techniques to resolve differences in partner preferences, wants, and needs. Lawe and Lawe (1980) described the use of conflict resolution techniques. Hall and Hall (1979) and Parker, Peltier, and Wolleat (1981) described joint problem-solving techniques used in resolving such inevitable differences. Scanzoni and Fox (1980) recommended "joint decisioning" techniques as necessary elements in the everyday workings of dual career marriages. In summary, it appears that most writers indicate that a dual career family life requires consistent use of problem-solving skills; a genuine willingness to take the other person into account; to change oneself and to accept change in one's partner; to develop a basic sense of mutual trust, respect, and esteem; and to retain a separate sense of identity (Parker, Peltier, & Wolleat, 1981).

The relative importance of these general coping strategies and skills to a well-functioning marriage have been widely discussed in the marital enrichment literature (Gurman & Kniskern, 1977; L'Abate, 1981). Marital enrichment programs are educational and preventative in nature. Such programs are quite similar in their emphasis on teaching open communication, conflict resolution, and decision-making skills (L'Abate, 1981). Of these three areas, the importance of "open communication" to satisfactory marital functioning is addressed most often (Guerney, 1977; L'Abate, 1981; Mace, 1977;

Miller, Nunnally, & Wackman, 1975; Otto, 1975) in the marital enrichment literature.

Efforts to develop educational programs for dual career couples have usually been shaped by researchers' documentation of the specific characteristics and styles which seem to be common among individuals who choose this lifestyle. According to Rice (1979), for example, certain personality characteristics often common to dual career couples which result in certain generalizable conflicts typically emerge. Rice (1979) noted a prominent need for achievement and individual recognition among both members of dual career couples. When these self-esteem enhancing needs were not met in their relationship, the dual career spouse tended to withdraw emotionally from his or her partner and invest more in work (Parker, Peltier, & Wolleat, 1981). Work was a ready "escape route" from conflicts with intimacy, as it was accessible to both partners and was a highly valued social activity.

Rice (1979) also noted that while dual career couples are supportive of one another, they can also be quite competitive. Helping couples to establish or restore a sense of equity or fairness in their relationship has often been cited as a primary goal of counseling with dual career couples (Rice, 1979). Thus it seems crucial that over time and across situations, benefits and constraints balance and are fairly distributed between spouses.

According to Amatea and Cross (1983), many young dual careerists, in particular, tend to think in an individualistic manner and lack a clear sense of the process of interdependent planning and decision making. The single-minded focus of the career training context and the relative lack of life experience available to young dual careerists appear to restrict their ability to think objectively about their lifestyle alternative or to prioritize among competing life roles and goals. In addition, Amatea and Cross (1983) contend that the professional training environment endorses only a narrow range of paths to "personal success," each tied to individual career entry and steady upward mobility. Few, if any, models depict patterns of joint career entry and mobility and only limited opportunities exist for viewing the impact of joint career commitments on the execution of other life roles.

While the predicaments and stresses facing the young dual career couples may be most obvious and most readily identifiable, there is also a more continuous developmental quality to these that has been noted by researchers. Wilke (1979) has offered a model summarizing a systems viewpoint of dual career families. Dual career themes are presented within a social systems framework; the issues of marriage, family, and career are identified at successive stages of the family life cycle, including early marriage, decision stage (e.g., will we have children?), young family midlife (with

children living at home), and midlife (with adult children). She identifies prototypical issues and coping demands common to each stage in the marriage, family, and career areas. Wilke (1979) asserted that by using a systems perspective one can focus on the simultaneous nature of the multiple forces at work, including the complex interplay of individual personality and developmental growth and change, issues related to career development and to behavior, and relationships toward children, toward peers, and finally, to aging parents. She emphasized the interdependence of all these elements and stressed the idea that any alteration in one part (e.g., the female role), will surely and directly alter all other parts.

Since increasing numbers of couples are choosing a dual career lifestyle, there will, in all likelihood, be an increased need to learn methods for coping more effectively with the stress generated. Recently, specially designed dual career interventions have been developed (Amatea & Cross, 1983; Kahnweiler & Kahnweiler, 1980; Parker, Peltier, & Wollat, 1981).

One such intervention is the Coupling and Careers (Amatea & Cross, 1983) program. It was constructed to assist dual career couples in developing effective personal and couple-based coping strategies. The program is designed for couples to attend together with a major focus on the examination of each couple's decision-making style. Acquiring a

well-functioning style of collaborative decision-making is facilitated through the modeling and teaching of specific communication and problem-solving skills. Concurrent with the couple focus, individual participants are given the opportunity to examine their own personal system of expectations and priorities regarding career, marital, and parental roles in order to develop a more effective individual coping style. The method of teaching these skills is through the medium of specific immediate concerns of the participants.

Amatea and Clark (1984) have reported some initial results on evaluation of the Coupling and Careers program. Pre-workshop and post-workshop data on 12 couples revealed that participants became significantly more accurate in their perceptions of their spouses' attitudes and feelings. They also reported a significantly increased level of satisfaction with their relationship immediately following participation in the workshop.

The current study sought to incorporate the specific recommendations for further research made by Amatea and Clark (1985) in their report on the pilot studies of the Coupling and Careers program. For instance, Amatea and Clark (1985) suggest that control groups be used to determine whether there were other related individual and couple program outcomes of this program. The current study utilized control groups and alternative criterion instruments that were specifically fitted to the

designated/goals outcomes outlined for the Coupling and Careers program (Amatea & Cross, 1983). Additionally, a larger (n = 40 couples, 80 individual data sets) and more diverse sample was utilized with subjects recruited from the wider community, as well as the university.

An effort to address the more general criticisms of previous evaluations of related marital enrichment programs included the following design considerations. First, an effort to utilize an evaluation design fitted to the goals of the programs (Schumn, 1983) and to fit criterion instruments, pretesting to posttesting, to major program components (Gurman & Kniskern, 1977) was made. Further, in an attempt to address durability of effects (i.e., the extent to which initial gains from program participation were maintained over time) (Joanning, 1982; Schumn, 1983), posttesting was conducted on a delayed basis. Finally, in an effort to explore sex-related variations in response (L'Abate, 1981), differences between males and females, as well as possible interactions between treatment and sex, were examined.

Need for the Study

Since interventions have been developed with the hope of preparing dual careerists to cope more effectively with the pressures of this lifestyle, there is a need to

evaluate the outcomes of such programs. Although the initial reports on short term dual career education programs are encouraging, most of these reports have been anecdotal in nature, conducted with very limited samples, and have included little empirical data on specified outcomes. Thus there is a need to examine more rigorously the effects of such programs on dual career couples since none of these programs have been evaluated in a systematic fashion.

Design of an evaluation study of a dual career guidance program must be completed in full acknowledgement of criticisms of marital enrichment program research. Efforts to evaluate marital enrichment programs have been criticized for not always having an evaluation design fitted to the goals of the program (Schumn, 1983); for not fitting criterion instruments, pretest to posttest, to each program component (Gurman & Kniskern, 1977); and for not addressing durability of effects issues. While many couples show significant gains on criterion measures immediately following such programs, most measures return to pretest levels soon after completion of the program (Joanning, 1982; Schumn, 1983).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of a short term intervention program for dual career

couples. This program was designed to expand couples' awareness of, adjustment to, and management of problems typically experienced by dual careerists, as well as to provide them basic coping strategies for dealing with such and to build on their communication, conflict resolution, and decision-making skills.

Three outcome variables were selected to assess the effectiveness of this program: 1) participants' work and family role salience; 2) their attitudes/perceptions regarding the quality of their marital communication; and 3) any reported changes in satisfaction with the quality of their interpersonal relationship. Since several of the coping strategies presented in the Coupling and Careers program suggest consideration of the values ranking associated with work and family role performance, changes in work and family role salience were a major outcome examined in this study. In addition, since the primary goals for the Coupling and Careers program were to train participants in the use of effective communication and joint problem-solving skills necessary for the constructive management of interpersonal conflict (Amatea & Cross, 1983) participants' perceptions/attitudes regarding their marital communication process were a second important area of interest. Finally, an assessment of changes in

couples' perceptions of the quality of their interpersonal relationship was undertaken.

General Research Questions

The specific research questions addressed in this study were

1) Did participation in a short-term dual career couples program have an impact on levels of dual career spouses' work and family role salience? More specifically, did participation in such a program change dual careerists' evaluation of or commitment to career, marital, or parental life roles?

2) Did participation in such a program affect dual career mates' perceptions of their couple-based communication?

3) Did participation in such a program affect dual career mates' relationship satisfaction level?

4) Did the program have a differential impact on males and females?

5) Were treatment effects observable four weeks following program completion?

Definition of Terms

Dual Career Couple - Two persons engaged in a lifestyle in which each individual pursues a separate career role

along with a committed relationship (Parker, Peltier, & Wolleat, 1981) constitute a dual career couple. The term career designates a job sequence that requires a high degree of commitment (time, energy, training); is highly salient personally (substantial ego involvement); and has a continual developmental quality (advances in responsibility, power, pay, and status) (Rapoport & Rapoport, 1976). The dual career couple becomes a dual career family when they establish a family life with at least one child.

Dual Worker Couple - Such a couple is characterized by both spouses working outside the home, but not necessarily committing themselves to a long term developmental progression of occupational pursuit. Often both spouses are not working by choice but by necessity.

Marital Communication - It is the process of mates transmitting feelings, attitudes, facts, beliefs, and ideas. Communication is not limited to words but also occurs through listening, silences, gestures, touch, and all the other nonlanguage symbols and clues used by persons in giving and receiving meaning (Bienvenu, 1979).

Career Role Salience - The extent to which the individual commits personal resources to the enactment of a career role and values rewards accruing from the career role, including the extent to which the individual depends on such roles to provide self-definition and feelings of

competency, and the extent to which individuals commit themselves to their work effort and career development (Amatea, Cross, Clark, & Bobby, in press).

Family Role Salience - The extent which the individual commits personal resources to enactment of a parental role and values rewards accruing from the parental roles, including the extent to which competencies of the role are valued by the individual and the extent to which they plan to take an active role in the development and management or implementation of parental role activities (Amatea, Cross, Clark, & Bobby, in press).

Marital Role Salience - The extent to which the individual commits personal resources to the enactment of the marital role and values rewards accruing from the marital role, including the extent to which competencies of the role are valued by the individual and the extent to which they plan to take an active role in the development, management, and implementation of marital role activities (Amatea, Cross, Clark, & Bobby, in press).

Relationship Change - The subjective attitude, or perception of feeling between a couple which may indicate to them that some facet of their relationship (i.e., satisfaction, communication, trust, intimacy, sensitivity,

or understanding) has changed over a given period of time
(Schlien, 1971).

CHAPTER II REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

In this chapter, a review of the literature related to the evolution and characteristics of the dual career couple and family form will be presented. The marital skill training and enrichment literature will then be reviewed as it pertains to the evaluation of dual career couples' educational programs. Finally, a description of the Coupling and Careers program, its rationale, goals, format, and previous findings are presented.

The Dual Career Family

Massive social changes in American society have radically affected the interface of work and family life and have led to the evolution of the dual career couple and/or family form. Certain changes over the past 30 years have contributed to the development of this lifestyle.

Following a period of more active involvement in the work force during World War II, the postwar era evolved as a time when women once again concerned themselves primarily with domestic tasks. As white collar jobs increased for

men, they again assumed the "breadwinner" role. During the 1950s the nature of work for middle class men and women was, for the most part, very different and unrelated.

During the 1960s, however, several social changes affected the work world. The advent of birth control, the women's liberation movement, the increasing value placed on individual development, high divorce rates, inflation and the demand for well-educated workers, all provided new opportunities for women and led to their steadily increasing involvement in the work place. This period was also a time in which expectations about marriage were changing. Shaevitz and Shaevitz (1979) note that during this time some women became dissatisfied at home and looked for outside work to meet their needs and interests. By the end of the 1970s, nearly half of the labor force was comprised of women (Johnson & Johnson, 1980).

Through the 1970s American society has shown an increasing emphasis on partnership in family life (Rapoport & Rapoport, 1971, 1976). Equity between husband and wife, joint activities, and collaboration in decision-making so as to maximize the possibilities for each family member to share the benefits of participation external to the family (e.g., leisure and educational as well as occupational participation) were increasingly evident. At work, new values emphasized rising expectations for personal development, self-expression, and the capacity to

accommodate to multiple role demands in the face of rapid social change. Individuals can be expected to face the demand to readapt to evolving work and family demands throughout the life-cycle (Rapoport & Rapoport, 1976).

The number of young people choosing to follow the dual career family pattern continues to rise rapidly (Hershman & Levenson, 1979; Katz, 1978). Many social indicators suggest that dual career couples will continue to rise in number. Higher education among women has been shown to lead to increased commitment to work, and an increased level of professionalization of career choice (Oppenheimer, 1973). Since professional women are more likely to marry professional men (Feldman, 1973), the dual career pattern may become more prevalent as more women seek advanced professional training.

Characteristics of the Dual Career Couple

Utilizing survey and interview formats administered to limited samples, various researchers have sought to identify characteristics of dual career marriages and families which differentiate them from more traditional families (Price-Bonham & Murphy, 1980; Rapoport & Rapoport, 1971; Rice, 1979). When compared to members of single career families, spouses in dual career marriages report a lower level for social interchange in

the areas of affection, inclusion, and control and are more self-reliant and self-sufficient (Burke & Weir, 1976). It has also been reported that both husbands and wives in dual career marriages have high needs for recognition and achievement (Parker, Peltier, & Wolleat, 1981) and are likely to be more inner directed and flexible in applying their personal values (Burke & Weir, 1976) than spouses from traditional families.

Certain structural characteristics also differentiate dual career from single career marriages. They often have only one child and seldom have more than two (Bebbington, 1973; Leslie & Leslie, 1977). Also, career women are much more likely to be continuous full-time workers than women employed at lower occupational ranks (Rapoport & Rapoport, 1976). Finally, dual career couples, being highly educated and having attained some degree of success at their careers, tend to have higher incomes (Rapoport & Rapoport, 1971).

Dual Career Lifestyle Conflicts and Stresses

Most literature on the dual career couple or family has centered on reporting the personal characteristics of two spouses, the stresses inherent to this lifestyle, and the variably successful methods of coping and adaptation utilized by them. While the dual career lifestyle provides many economic and emotional benefits, it frequently creates conflicts and stresses for both men and women. The

critical issues seem to revolve around role overload, role conflict, the division of household labor and child care responsibilities, the level of support provided each partner by his or her career, and the level of satisfaction gained from work and family roles. Problems with role overload, role strain, and role conflict have repeatedly been documented in the literature (Hall & Hall, 1979; Johnson & Johnson, 1977; Rapoport & Rapoport, 1969; Sigall, 1979).

Role overload occurs when a spouse suffers a sense of distress and helplessness at not being able to handle effectively both their personal and professional responsibilities (Shaevitz & Shaevitz, 1979). Overload arises when more roles are expected or accepted than can be effectively performed (Johnson & Johnson, 1977). Johnson and Johnson (1977) found that, while the husband's description of role strain was vague and unemotional, women clearly described it as resulting in fatigue, emotional depletion, and guilt. Women were less likely to resolve the role strain than men. In addition, young couples appeared to experience the greatest role strain, due to the demands of raising young children as well as the acquiring of new roles and financial obligations (Parker, Peltier, & Wolleat, 1981). Apparently, demands of a particular life stage can influence the role strain of both sexes.

Role conflict has been defined as a subjective feeling of frustration in which persons are pulled in

opposite directions in the performance of their roles. Criteria for success in the work world and at home are often discrete and mutually exclusive. The problems of combining these two different worlds are not only those dealing with competitive demands on and energy but those that exist at a deeper level as well. Sheer physical overload of tasks is often further exacerbated by social/psychological factors involving normative conflicts (Rapaport & Rapoport, 1969). Normative dilemmas arise as individuals diverge from socially prescribed patterns of behavior or norms. Such dilemmas can come in the form of identity and sex role conflicts, discrepancy between personal norms and social norms, and/or lack of social or kinship support for the dual career lifestyle (Price-Bonham & Murphy, 1980; Rapoport & Rapoport, 1969).

One area of frequent struggle for dual career couples evolves out of a real or an anticipated redistribution of resources and influence power. Couples usually struggle with sex role tensions (Rapoport & Rapoport, 1971) which can involve the need for partners to transcend previous role socialization. Sex role tension can be reflected in the amount and type of domestic and child care tasks that will be shared by the husband as well as the extent to which the wife will assert herself to achieve outside of the home and/or to share responsibilities within the home. Hall and Hall (1979) note that the most difficult part of role sharing is giving up

the ego needs that we satisfy by keeping a role all to ourselves.

Such changing sex role expectations have typically produced role conflict in men as well as women (Sigall, 1979). Their role conflicts often occur when men attempt to respond to new domestic roles while simultaneously continuing a high work profile or success pattern. Couples may compete with one another as certain roles are redefined. This competition may stimulate power, control, and dominance issues that inhibit effective interpersonal exchange (Price-Bonham & Murphy, 1980). In addition, many men have not been socialized to assume domestic and child rearing functions in a family. They may feel awkward, uncomfortable, and inadequate to perform these new functions. Radical shifts in traditionally female-dominated roles can stimulate masculine fears of losing power, control, and authority in the relationship. The sex identity or tension lines which sometimes result coalesce around monetary, supervisory, and division of domestic responsibility issues (Shaevitz & Shaevitz, 1979).

Many dual career couples are greatly concerned with the possible effects on their children of their both pursuing careers. Johnson and Johnson (1977) interviewed 28 dual career families with young children and found that all of the wives, without exception, retained major responsibility for most areas of child rearing and reported a major concern over the conflict between their career and their children.

While some research suggests that the wife has more difficulty in jointly handling work and family roles (Johnson & Johnson, 1977; Sigall, 1979), other research suggests that the husband has equal difficulty in adjusting (Lein, 1979). In one study, it was found that men who performed feminine household tasks more often experienced a greater depression than men who did not (St. John-Parsons, 1978). Thus, to some extent, the dual career lifestyle affects both husband and wife.

The reasons given for men not being more involved in household responsibilities are many. Some suggest that men have been reluctant to increase their participation in home life because they get little or no support for this from coworkers, friends, and families of origin (Lein, 1979). Rice (1979) suggests that most men feel on the outside of the home because, traditionally, they have not been socialized to express their personalities through the home.

Psychic strain increases when dual career couples have a child (Rapoport & Rapoport, 1976). A decision must be made as to whose career will take a secondary role. In many cases, the woman simply takes on three jobs--wife, mother, and career person--in order to meet her own needs, as well as society's expectations (Sigall, 1979).

Sex role sanctions are strong in the area of child rearing, with the expectation that the mother will be the

primary psychological parent and the one principally responsible for raising the child (Johnson & Johnson, 1977). This usually means that she is the one who either adjusts or interrupts her career or arranges for child care services. Although both partners may initially espouse egalitarian principles, research has shown that women do more than their share of domestic and/or child care tasks (Johnson & Johnson, 1980).

Maintenance of personal identity becomes a problem when one departs from the standard patterns of behavior that are institutionally supported in traditional role structures. Where men and women continue to pursue their personal development through the same, rather than different, channels or roles, with their different norms and sanctions, they may find themselves confronting the issue of how to maintain their distinct identities (Price-Bonham & Murphy, 1980).

As the dual career couple undergoes more stress and becomes more isolated from relatives and friends, increased expectations are placed on the marital relationship for satisfying intellectual, emotional, and social needs (Johnson & Johnson, 1977). Because of a commitment to both career and family, dual career couples usually have less time for sociability with friends and extended family (St. Johns-Parsons, 1978).

The husband and wife in the dual career family are involved in three role systems, the work system of each spouse and the family system which they share. Each system makes different demands according to the position of the role in the system, and each role makes different demands on the individual according to developmental period or life phase. The two career roles plus the family role must be complementary if the family is to function smoothly (Hall & Hall, 1979; Rapoport & Rapoport, 1978; Shaevitz & Shaevitz, 1979).

Consistent with role theory, transition points in these roles may be especially stressful. If one spouse is offered a more attractive position, through relocation, but there is nothing inviting for the other spouse, then the couple must decide whose career is to take precedence. The general conclusion is that some career sacrifices are inevitable in dual career marriages (Holmstrom, 1972).

In the family, the heaviest strain is at the time of having infants and preschool children. If the couple arrange their lives so as to have the family role demands peak first, they may miss opportunities for career advancement. If they choose to let career role strains peak first, they may pay the costs later in family life through fatigue of being older and having greater age gaps between themselves

and their children. If one spouse peaks while the other defers heavy involvement, one may pay a price in career development as well as perhaps bear a heavier brunt of family role strain. Obviously, many combinations are possible. The issue of role cycling, and achieving desirable fits in the family among the various role cycles is only now beginning to be understood (Parker, Peltier, & Wolleat, 1981; Wilke, 1979).

While the predicaments and stresses facing the young dual career couple may be most obvious and most readily identifiable, there are also more long term developmental stresses noted by several researchers. Wilke (1979), for example, identifies prototypical issues and coping demands common to each stage of the family life-cycle. In her article, she highlights the complex interplay of individual personality and developmental growth and change, and describes issues related to the stage and nature of the couples' development as a unit, and the issues related to career development, to behavior and relationship toward children, toward peers, and finally, to aging parents. She emphasizes the interdependence of all these elements stressing the idea that any alteration in one part (e.g., the female role) will surely and directly alter all other parts.

The literature indicates that a variety of mechanisms --some functional and some dysfunctional--are employed by

dual career couples in their attempts to cope with the stress interference of their lifestyle. Shaevitz and Shaevitz (1979) discuss several of the most common mistakes dual career couples make in trying to deal with the pressures of their situation. Some unproductive reactions include 1) denial, 2) blaming and scapegoating, 3) depression, 4) psychosomatic reactions, 5) withdrawal, 6) rigidity, and 7) "going crazy." The problem with each of these "solutions" is that, while they give some expression to, and possibly some temporary relief from the stress people feel, they do not help people deal constructively with the environmental or situational stress factors, or their personal internal reactions (i.e., feeling pressured, helpless, tired, or depressed). Instead of resolving the difficulty, these mistaken mechanisms often end up escalating stress (Parker, Peltier, & Wolleat, 1981).

Adaptive strategies for coping with the stresses of the dual career lifestyle involve a balancing of both person centered and couple centered elements. Person centered elements involve classic stress reduction and time management techniques (Bebbington, 1973; Hall & Hall, 1979). The use of explicit techniques to resolve differences and to carry out effective joint decision making has also been discussed (Hall & Hall, 1979; Lawe & Lawe, 1980).

Person centered stress management techniques involve 1) "stress optimization" (i.e., acknowledging of dual

career stress as inevitable and preferable to the stress of alternative lifestyles); 2) prioritization among and between roles (i.e., the clear identification of a salient role can serve to minimize feelings of personal conflict among dual careerists); 3) compartmentalization (i.e., the mental focusing on roles so as to increase efficiency and decrease distracting conflicts and pressures); 4) compromising or moderating one's personal performance standards; 5) personal relaxation/stress reduction strategies such as exercise, leisure, and recreational pursuits.

Rapoport and Rapoport (1971, 1978) emphasize the need for a three-level approach to stress management for dual career couples involving 1) an increased awareness of the issues involved in stressor situations so that individuals are better able to formulate more adaptive alternatives, 2) enhancement of communication/interpersonal skills between partners so that rapport is sharpened and decision making is more equitable and efficient, and 3) the development of a well-functioning external support structure for all family members so that emotional and physical needs can be met outside the family as well as within.

A critical element in the successful management of stress described by many dual careerists is the presence of a "helping component" in the marital relationship (Burke & Weir, 1976) characterized by open communication, empathy, emotional reassurance, support, and a sensitivity

to one another's feelings. Rice (1979) notes that while dual career couples tend to be supportive of one another, they can also be competitive although they generally deny it (Johnson & Johnson, 1977).

Once a couple or a partner becomes aware of the normative and excessive stressors in the dual career situation and has communicated this understanding to the partner, couples can begin taking action. Various researchers have offered the following suggestions:

- 1) Asking each other for assistance and support (Rapoport & Rapoport, 1971).
- 2) Discussing expectations, needs, and goals with one another (Rice, 1979; Sager, 1976).
- 3) Scheduling and spending regular time alone and together (Hall & Hall, 1979; Rapoport & Rapoport, 1976; Shaevitz & Shaevitz, 1979).
- 4) Limiting the number of obligations that are taken on at any one time (Hall & Hall, 1979).
- 5) Setting priorities for household tasks and reducing standards (Johnson & Johnson, 1977; Shaevitz & Shaevitz, 1979).
- 6) Looking for help outside the family for domestic maintenance and child care needs (Rapoport & Rapoport, 1976).
- 7) Talking to other couples who share a similar lifestyle (Rapoport & Rapoport, 1976).

Available Interventions

Few models are typically available depicting patterns of joint career entry and mobility and only limited opportunities exist for viewing the impact of joint career commitments on the execution of other life roles.

Although a variety of career counseling interventions have been designed to influence individuals' life role expectations and planning, and the idea of visualizing a career choice in the context of a total lifestyle is a commonly heard career guidance maxim, few guidance interventions to date incorporate information about the issues, decisions, stresses, and benefits inherent in the dual career lifestyle (Amatea & Cross, 1983). Few career counselors of women deal with the issue of combining work and family roles in a realistic fashion (Super, 1969). Women especially are often encouraged to believe that they can do it all rather than to examine closely the demands and expectations involved. Furthermore, career guidance efforts involving young men continue to be organized around a structure in which the husband is viewed as the primary (if not the only) "breadwinner" (Super, 1969). Little attention has been given to his potentially greater family work role or to the implications of how his wife's career progress might affect his own course.

As writers and researchers are increasingly identifying the problematic aspects of this lifestyle, a

variety of different resources are being developed to assist dual career couples in coping more comfortably with this lifestyle. A number of books for dual careerists are now available (e.g., Hall & Hall, 1979; Lawe & Lawe, 1980; Shaevitz & Shaevitz, 1979), and dual career preparation and planning programs have begun to be developed (Amatea & Cross, 1983; Kahnweiler & Kahnweiler, 1980).

One such program is the Coupling and Careers program (Amatea & Cross, 1983). This program was designed to impact on dual careerists, individually, as well as to address their interaction and collective decision making as couples. The development of this program had its roots in the marital skills training and enrichment literature. Since this is a marital training program, the literature on marital enrichment will be reviewed prior to describing the actual program.

Marital Enrichment Programs

Most marital enrichment models are related by their general emphasis on communication, negotiation, conflict resolution, and/or decision-making skills. Attempts to offer marital enrichment programs challenge what Vincent (1973) has referred to as "the myth of naturalism" in marriage; that is, the widespread idea in our culture that success in marriage requires no particular skills, and that persons

who need help in this area are inadequate and/or incompetent.

Contemporary couples are increasingly prone to judge their marriages by internal standards, being more concerned with the quality of the relationship (Mace, 1977). Within this framework has arisen a movement toward marital enrichment. Such programs are for couples who have what they perceive to be a fairly well functioning marriage and want to make their marriage even more mutually satisfying. Marital enrichment programs are generally concerned with enhancing couples' communication, emotional life, and/or sexual relationships. They are designed to foster marital strengths and develop marriage potential while maintaining a consistent and primary focus on the relationship of the couple (Otto, 1975).

Structured marital skill training programs are designed to enhance marriage and family life and cover a wide range of interests and concerns including 1) communication skills, 2) couple encounter, 3) couples enrichment, 4) fair fighting, 5) problem solving training, 6) parenting skills, and 7) family enrichment. These diverse programs vary on dimensions of content area, target populations, method of instruction, length of training, therapeutic objectives, and psychological rationale. Classification of these programs has primarily focused on what the program

teaches (i.e., content) and whom the program addresses (i.e., target population) (L'Abate, 1977; Otto, 1976; 1981).

Typically, the goals of marital skill training programs are educational or enrichment oriented in nature rather than therapeutic and are primarily concerned with prevention. Such programs involve time-limited contracts, specific predetermined topics, and are not oriented to changing the basic structure of the couple relationship (L'Abate, 1981).

Mace (1977) has stated that marital enrichment usually involves helping couples make a serious commitment to growth. The basic skills needed for interpersonal competence are many and varied but three are often identified as most significant. The first is "awareness," developing the couple's ability to understand their rules of interaction, to reflect on this process, and to accurately predict communication strengths and weaknesses. The second, "effective communication" (i.e., communication skills), is seen as necessary to changing past rules and allowing flexibility of interaction patterns. The third, "conflict resolution," is the area in which creative use of conflict is stressed. Since the inevitability of disagreement and anger between marital partners is often ignored, Mace (1977) and others feel that the art of accepting and resolving one another's

anger is a significant marital interaction skill and potential growth point that can deepen and strengthen a relationship.

Classification of Marital Enrichment Programs

Skill training programs can be classified according to a family lifestyle cycle sequence: 1) premarital or neomarital training, 2) marital, 3) parenthood, 4) total family, 5) divorce mediation and adjustment. This review will focus only on marital enrichment programs.

Major marital enrichment programs reviewed by L'Abate (1981) included 1) Couples Communication Program (Miller, Nunnally, & Wackman, 1975); 2) the Association of Couples for Marital Enrichment (Mace & Mace, 1976); 3) Marriage Encounter (Bosco, 1973; Calvo, 1975); 4) Conjugal Relationship Enhancement (Guerney, 1977); and 5) structured enrichment programs (L'Abate, 1975, 1977). L'Abate (1981) lists several characteristics common to most of these programs: 1) an emphasis on open and direct exchange of feelings without emotional put-downs or other manipulations; 2) the assumption of personal responsibility for whatever is said or done in the marriage; 3) the classification of feelings as distinct from thoughts and actions (i.e., what we feel is one thing, negotiating and translating feelings into mutually acceptable courses of action another); 4) the identification of multiple available interaction

alternatives with the selection by the couple of options most constructive for their marriage.

L'Abate (1981) has suggested that a major differentiating feature of most marital skill training and enrichment programs is whether they emphasize sharing of emotions and feelings or deal with actions and negotiations. He compares such programs differentiating them in terms of their degree of structure, group size, theoretical emphasis, teaching modality, and length. Moreover, Ulrici, L'Abate, and Wagner (1981) have offered a model categorizing marital and family skill training programs according to their theoretical orientation or orientation to change. They proposed emotions, reasons, and actions (E-R-A) as the three primary modalities for therapeutic change and classify intervention methods according to this model. They suggest that this framework can provide researchers with a more explicit investigation of program outcomes, and clinicians and counselors with a structure for identifying the "significant psychological dimensions operating within the various skill training programs as well as the effect that these variables might have on program clientele" (Ulrici, L'Abate, & Wagner, 1981, p. 307). According to the E-R-A model, methods with an emotional orientation focus on 1) experiential exercises which differentiate feeling states, 2) development of self- and interpersonal awareness through

interaction and role play, 3) teaching skills of interpersonal sensitivity and communication, and 4) developing body awareness through movement and interpersonal body contact. Methods with a rational orientation focus on the development of rational understanding which supports control of emotions and behavior. These programs utilize 1) teaching of facts, theories, and strategies through reading, lecture, and discussion; 2) developing insight and cognitive understanding to differentiate feelings from actions through analysis of past and present relationships; and 3) teaching skills of rational thinking and ego control with emphasis on problem solving and decision making. Methods with an action orientation generally utilize some form of behavior modification principles. They tend to focus on 1) teaching behavior principles through lectures, models, and practical exercise; 2) solving behavioral problems through experimental analysis; 3) teaching and increasing wanted behavior and extinguishing unwanted behavior; and 4) regulation of overt behavior through observational learning and cognitive mediational process. Within each general E-R-A category specific programs are referenced and differentiated as to their content focus, method of training, and theoretical orientation. This listing and categorization of marital and family skill training enrichment program (Ulrici, L'Abate, & Wagner, 1981) is the

most comprehensive comparison of such programs currently available.

Research on Marital Enrichment Programs

Much research on marital skill training and enrichment programs has examined the efficacy of a particular program content to improve the skill of a target sample. Findings report the degree of change between pretest and posttest evaluations of a designated program (Gurman & Kniskern, 1977). Yet, as L'Abate (1981) and Schumm (1983) note, there are few studies which compare the relative effectiveness of one program with another. In addition, investigations which examine how marital skill training programs operate to effect change have been quite limited.

In reviewing the outcome research on two popular marital enrichment programs, the Minnesota Couple Communication Program (Miller, Nunnally, & Wackman, 1975) and the Conjugal Relationship Enhancement Program (Guerney, 1977), Gurman and Kniskern (1977) observed that outcome criteria typically fell into three general categories: 1) overall marital satisfaction and adjustment, 2) relationship skills, or 3) individual personality variables such as self-actualization and self-esteem. In each of these categories, 60 percent of the investigations reported positive change. However, 84 percent of the criterion measures used were based on

participants' self-reports, with self-reports being the primary or sole change measure in 66 percent of those. In addition, about 20 percent of these studies were done without control group measures. Although behavioral objective measures have been used in some marital enrichment evaluation studies (with 75 percent of those demonstrating change), self-report measure designs still outnumbered objective measure designs five to one.

Gurman and Kniskern (1977) conclude that available information on marital enrichment outcomes should be studied cautiously. They recommended six specific issues which needed to be addressed: 1) durability of enrichment-induced change, 2) generalizability of enrichment-induced change, 3) range of potential participants, 4) placement of enrichment programs within a developmental framework, 5) demonstration of change through nonparticipant rating sources, and 6) clarification and delineation of salient change-inducing components within the problems.

Evaluating premarital counseling programs, Schumm (1983) cites many of the same research/evaluation deficiencies. He notes that the most well-designed evaluations yield mixed results with some aspects of communication improving while others do not (Miller, Nunnally, & Wackman, 1975; Schlien, 1971). Even among well-designed studies, heterogeneity of outcome measures often

prevents a fair measure of differential effectiveness (Schumn, 1983).

Schumn (1983) goes on to stress the need to base the evaluation design on the goals of the program. If a program has goals of enhancing communication, awareness, and/or perceptual accuracy and decision-making, then an evaluation should have objective pretest to posttest change measures fitted to each program component. It has also been suggested that outcome variables could be better measured by utilizing ratings from independent observers in addition to using client self-reports (Gurman & Kniskern, 1977).

Regrettably, there appears to be no evidence in the literature which substantiates that marital skill training and enrichment programs have long-term effects. Though most couples show significant gains on criterion measures immediately following such programs (Joanning, 1982; Schumn, 1983), most measures return to pretest levels by five to six weeks following program participation. Perhaps the most pervasive criticism of the research evaluating marriage enrichment program outcomes has been that there is no evidence for durability of effects (L'Abate, 1981). Consequently, research in this area should be designed to address this issue.

The need to compare alternative intervention programs and to delineate the most significant change-inducing

components within each model are also recommended directions for research. Another recommendation is the need to more accurately match the individuals' style and need to program content, process mode of instruction, and orientation to change (Schumn, 1983; Ulrici, L'Abate, & Wagner, 1981).

Schumn (1983) underlines the need for better integration of theory and measurement in the design and evaluation of marital communication skills programs. He notes that the rationale for intervening to change couples' patterns of communication has seldom been expressed in formal theoretical terms. Garland's (1981) formulation of the relationship of perceptual accuracy to marital adjustment is critiqued to demonstrate the many complications involved in accommodating theory, intervention, and research considerations. Schumn (1983) further notes that present evaluation techniques add little to our knowledge of couple/family dynamics. Such failure to account for reasons why couples change clearly hinders the improvement of such programs.

Smith, Shoffner, and Scott (1979), in a review of marriage and family enrichment movement, expressed some major concerns about it as a new professional area: 1) it is touted as a cure-all, 2) there is questionable training of leaders, 3) expectations of participants are higher than what the program can deliver, 4) a major assumption

is that enrichment may become one of life's peak experiences, 5) it cannot prevent major social ills, and 6) no direct and/or hard evidence is as yet available to substantiate any preventative benefit.

The Coupling and Careers Program

Amatea and Clark (1984) have reported some initial findings on studies of a dual career couples education program, the Coupling and Careers program. This research project was a beginning effort to determine if a specific set of workshop activities had an impact on certain attitudinal and behavioral variables. The workshops were conducted at the University of Florida throughout the fall of 1981 with married dual career couples. Evaluation of these groups was considered formative. The program has been further refined and developed on the basis of results from these pilot studies.

The initial workshop was designed to 1) increase participants' awareness of predictable career and family role stresses inherent to the dual career lifestyle, 2) train participants in the use of personal value clarification and prioritizing strategies useful in managing role conflict, 3) increase participants' skills in the use of effective communication and joint problem-solving strategies necessary for the constructive

management of interpersonal conflict, and 4) provide a group milieu in which couples could normalize their own experiences in this lifestyle through contact with others in similar lifestyle situations.

The workshop consisted of a variety of activities focused on building an awareness of each person's individual role expectations and role coping style and on how mates functioned together in joint planning and problem-solving. The format consisted of 1) individual and group exercises and discussions of role prioritizing, self-assessment of conflict resolution, and communication styles; 2) simulated tasks of problem situations experienced by dual career couples and approaches to resolving these situations; and 3) participation in couple skill rehearsal exercises to enhance communication and conflict resolution capabilities.

In the pilot evaluation of the program, data were collected by means of three instruments--the Relationship Issues Checklist (RIC), the Couple Satisfaction Scale (CSS), and the Life Role Salience Scales (LRSS). The instruments were first administered to program participants during the initial hour of the workshop and then readministered by mail three weeks following participation in the program. In addition, during the final half hour of the program, participants were requested to complete a workshop evaluation form in

which they commented as to the portions of the workshop they found most and least valuable and the ways in which they felt the workshop content or format might be improved.

Analyses of the pretest and posttest data both by sex and for the group as a whole using related sample t tests revealed a significant difference from pretest to posttest at the $p < .025$ level in Couple Satisfaction Scale scores in the direction of greater reported satisfaction at the time of posttesting. Comparison of male and female subgroups revealed no significant differences between the two groups in terms of this change. Analysis of the Relationship Issues Checklist revealed that among the 30 issues rated, participants rated career launching and personal independence issues as of greatest primacy. Issues involving childrearing, home maintenance, and finances were of lesser concern to both male and female participants. Participants' ability to accurately predict their mate's rating of the importance of these issues was not found to differ significantly from pretesting to posttesting, but their ability to predict their mate's rating of comfort in dealing with these issues did change significantly. For the group as a whole, these pretesting to posttesting differences were significant at the $p < .012$ level, indicating that perceptual accuracy had improved at posttesting. When analyzed by sex, this improvement was

maintained for the male group only ($p < .13$). The career role salience of the LRSS decreased from pretesting to posttesting at a moderately significant level ($p < .090$).

Amatea and Clark (1984) stated that while their results clearly suggested that relationship attitudes, personal expectations, and to a lesser extent, relationship skills could be affected by participation in the program, further research was needed to examine more rigorously, by the use of control groups, the impact of this intervention.

Utilizing results from this pilot study, a refined version of the Coupling and Careers program was formulated (Amatea & Cross, 1983). The stated goals of this program were 1) to increase participants' awareness of predictable career and family role stresses inherent to the dual career lifestyle, 2) to develop a more collaborative set between mates whereby couples could experience themselves as working together versus competitively in managing stresses and choices of the dual career lifestyle, 3) to introduce participants to common styles of coping with dual career pressures, 4) to acquaint participants with relevant personal value clarification and prioritizing strategies useful in managing competing personal expectations and dictates, 5) to train participants in the use of effective communication and joint problem-solving skills necessary in the constructive management of interpersonal conflict,

and 6) to foster a sense of mutual support and commonality among dual career couples through the sharing of common concerns and issues (Amatea & Cross, 1983).

Summary

The dual career couple and family form has developed through diverse social changes in work and family values and particularly, in response to evolving work roles for women (Johnson & Johnson, 1977; Rapoport & Rapoport, 1971, 1976; Shaevitz & Shaevitz, 1979). There is little question that this lifestyle will continue to become more prevalent (Hershman & Levenson, 1979; Ladewig & White, 1984). Dual career spouses need to adapt to major changes in traditional sex-role allocations of work and family responsibilities (Lein, 1979; Price-Bonham Murphy, 1980).

The existing literature on dual career couples is largely anecdotal in nature. It concentrates on descriptions of characteristics, conflicts, and stresses inherent to this lifestyle, as well as suggestions of various coping strategies and management skills for dual careerists (Parker, Peltier, & Wolleat, 1981). Frameworks for understanding the intervention needs of dual career couples are also available (Amatea & Cross, 1983; Hall & Hall, 1979; Parker, Peltier, & Wolleat, 1981; Rapoport & Rapoport, 1971, 1976). The general need for programs to assist dual career couples in preparing to adapt to the

careerists (Parker, Peltier, & Wolleat, 1981). Frameworks for understanding the intervention needs of dual careerists are also available (Amatea & Cross, 1983; Hall & Hall, 1979; Parker, Peltier, & Wolleat, 1981; Rapoport & Rapoport, 1971, 1976). The general need for programs to assist dual career couples in preparing to adapt to the demands of this lifestyle is acknowledged (Parker, Peltier, & Wolleat, 1981). Such programs have begun to develop from a limited number of sources; yet, currently, none of these have been evaluated in any systematic fashion.

Dual careerists guidance/education programs are related to marital enrichment and skill building interventions. Therefore, any effort to evaluate a dual careerist guidance/education program will need to be sensitive to previous criticism and comment on research in the marital enrichment field. Previous research on the Coupling and Careers program (Amatea & Clark, 1984) was reviewed.

CHAPTER III RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to evaluate a short-term intervention program for dual career couples. The program, which was informational and skill based in nature, was designed to expand awareness of the predicaments typically experienced by couples involved in this lifestyle, to help them clarify their work and family role values and commitments, and to develop their couples' communication and decision-making skills. The impact of this 10-hour program, entitled the Coupling and Careers program, was assessed using a randomized group pretest-posttest design with the control group receiving delayed treatment. The impact of the program was examined by comparing the results of a pretest and posttest of control and experimental group subjects on three variables: 1) salience of work and family roles; 2) attitudes regarding their marital communication patterns; and 3) the degree of perceived changes in the equality of their relationship. The differential impact of the program on these three variables by sex of participant was also examined.

The remainder of this chapter is devoted to describing the methods and procedures used in this study. This chapter is organized into the following sections of information: 1) research design, 2) population and sample, 3) procedures--sampling, treatment and data collection, 4) criterion instruments, 5) hypotheses, and 6) data analysis.

Research Design

The effects of the Coupling and Careers program were investigated utilizing the design depicted in Table 3-1. Hypotheses were tested using data derived from a randomized pretest-posttest design (Campbell & Stanley, 1963).

TABLE 3-1
RANDOMIZED PRETEST-POSTTEST DESIGN

	Group	Pretest	Treatment Variable	4-week Interval	Posttest	Delayed Treatment
(R)	E	Y ₁	X	---	Y ₂	
(R)	C	Y ₁		---	Y ₂	X

Following an initial screening to determine whether they met the established sampling criteria, couples were randomly assigned to either a control or treatment group. The experimental and control group subjects were assessed on the criterion measures on two occasions. Both groups were first administered a pretest; the experimental group then received the 10-hour treatment. The intervention was delivered as an intensive weekend experience with participants spending 3½ hours Friday and 6½ hours Saturday completing the program. Time spent completing criterion instruments and demographic information was in addition to program participation time.

The decision to utilize a delayed posttest was prompted by a number of considerations. A primary concern was to assess durability of effects since previous research on marital enrichment programs had been criticized for measuring change only immediately following the intervention with little evidence of any lasting effects available (Gurman & Kniskern, 1977; L'Abate, 1981). The option of doing two posttestings, one immediately following the workshop and one four weeks later, was rejected because of concerns about developing testing sensitivity with three administrations of the same instruments (equivalent forms were not available).

Although the randomized pretest-posttest control group design has many advantages and is frequently used in research, it also has some limitations. Internal validity may be affected by intra-session history (i.e., something else happening within the duration of the intervention which produces changes in subjects or effects which occur in subjects simply due to the time and energy they invest in participation rather than to the content of the intervention). Subject mortality presents another problem with some self-selecting processes likely to occur.

External validity may be affected through sensitization by pretesting of the experimental group; that is, it may be that the experimental treatment produces significant effects, but only because a pretest was administered. It is also possible that pretesting may shape participants' expectations regarding the nature or content of the treatment.

Population and Sample

The population for this study consisted of all dual career couples in the Gainesville area who were in the preparation, launching, establishment, or maintaining phases of their careers. Since much of the research on dual career couples indicates that the most stressful times are the launching and establishment phases of their career

development (Hall & Hall, 1979; Rice, 1979), it was intended that this portion of the population would be over-represented in the sample.

A dual career couple was defined as two persons engaged in a lifestyle in which each individual pursues a separate career role along with a committed interpersonal relationship (Parker, Peltier, & Wolleat, 1981). The term career designates a job sequence that requires a high degree of commitment (time, energy, training); is highly salient personally (substantial ego involvement); and has a continual developmental quality (advances in responsibility, power, pay, and status) (Rapoport & Rapoport, 1976). Both spouses in all couples in the sample were presently employed full-time or participating in graduate level studies which required a minimum of 30 hours per week of their time. Some of the individuals sampled (12) were combining their schooling with part-time jobs that might not be considered professional level work. All subjects had completed bachelor's degrees. All but 8 couples had at least one child.

Sampling Procedures

Interested parties learned of the workshops through flyers, posters, newspaper articles, or introductory talks given by the researcher to various civic, and religious groups

and campus organizations. Informative talks included introductory and summary information on

- 1) payoffs and predicaments of the dual career lifestyle,
- 2) the goals and objectives of the workshop,
- 3) the nature of the commitment involved in participating in this project, and
- 4) specific requirements for the population able to participate in the project.

It was stressed that this program was intended to be educational and preventative in nature, being in no way a substitute for remedial individual or marital counseling.

It was expected that most of the sample would already have some "real life" experience with a dual career lifestyle or some expectations regarding the possible benefits and liabilities involved in this lifestyle. All subjects were involved in this research on a voluntary basis and as a couple. Requirements for participation were that

- 1) all couples participating had been married a minimum of six months,
- 2) the couple had not participated in marital counseling or any other related marital enrichment workshops in the past six months,

- 3) both members of the couple were employed and/or participating in graduate level studies at least 30 hours per week, and
- 4) both members of the couple had completed a bachelor's degree.

All potential subjects were screened by the researcher to determine whether the program was suitable to their needs and to assure that they met established criteria. The decisions about who was to be considered a dual career couple were made by the researcher following the definition presented above. Subjects' levels of education, current involvement with work and/or graduate level training, and the commitment of both husband and wife to career roles (where work was considered a highly salient, continuous, and progressive activity) functioned as selection criteria.

A total sample size of 40 couples ($n = 80$ individuals) was considered a minimum for this study. Couples who met screening criteria were then randomly assigned to treatment and control groups. Control group subjects were offered the treatment (i.e., the Coupling and Careers program) on a delayed basis, following their completion of posttesting.

Treatment Procedures

This study began during the spring of 1985. All groups were completed by the end of the spring of 1986. Treatment.

groups received a total of 10 hours of involvement in the Counseling and Careers program. The program consisted of a 3½ hour session on Friday evening and a 6½ hour session on Saturday. Groups were led by a professional counselor who was licensed as a marriage and family therapist. Couples were required to attend the workshop in its entirety and to take all criterion instruments at designated times.

The Coupling and Careers program consists of five phases. The first phase focuses on examining demands of the dual career lifestyle while building a supportive group atmosphere and identifying common concerns of participants. Phase two introduces person-centered methods of managing role conflict (such as competing role expectations and demands) through examination of individual wants and priorities. Using the typology of role-coping strategies emerging from this second phase, the third phase of the program emphasizes the development of participants' skills in examining and prioritizing personal role expectations.

The two remaining phases of the program focus on exploring each couple's style of making decisions and resolving differences. Potential blocks to communication and problem-solving between couples are identified and specific strategies for improving communication and decision making are presented. The workshop ends with

each couple identifying a relevant next step in implementing the joint problem-solving process around an issue they discussed in the workshop. A more detailed description of the Coupling and Careers program is available in Amatea & Cross (1983).

Because the Coupling and Careers program is designed to be delivered in a small group format (i.e., 4-5 couples per group), it was necessary to have multiple treatment and control groups which followed the same training curriculum and treatment procedures. Since all couples who participated in this study volunteered to do so on the assumption that they would receive the Coupling and Careers program, subjects in the control groups received treatment on a delayed basis. Control groups were scheduled for their posttesting at the time they were scheduled for delayed treatment groups; that is, 4 weeks following pretesting. Approximately 3/4 of control group couples received the delayed treatment.

Data Collection Procedures

All criterion instruments were administered as part of a complete test packet. The test packet included

- 1) the Life Roles Salience Scales (Amatea & Cross, 1983);
- 2) the Marital Communication Inventory (Bienvenu, 1979);

and 3) the Relationship Change Scale (Schlien, 1971). Additionally, a demographic data sheet was used, requesting basic information on 1) sex and age; 2) years of education; and 3) work, marital, and family background.

Participants were asked not to share test results with their spouse or any other participants. Participants were not informed by the researcher on how they, their spouses, or anyone else scored on the criterion instruments. The instrument battery took 40 minutes to complete. This time was supplementary to time involved in participation in the intervention.

Treatment group subjects were tested at the beginning of their initial session, and four weeks following. Posttesting for the treatment groups was usually done at a follow-up meeting. However, was necessary for the researcher to deliver or mail questionnaires in some cases. Control group subjects received pretesting at an initial orientation meeting that served to administer instruments and to acquaint the subjects briefly, with the program. As with the control group subjects, it was necessary to mail or deliver posttesting to some couples, but a large majority of clients filled out their questionnaires at follow-up sessions.

Instrumentation

All data collection instruments were formatted into a test packet. This packet included a demographic questionnaire, the Life Role Salience Scales (Amatea, Cross, Clark, & Bobby, in press), the Marital Communication Inventory (Bienvenu, 1979), and the Relationship Change Scale (Schlien, 1971).

Demographic Data Sheet

A complete copy of the data sheet can be found in Appendix B. It asked participants to provide information on age, sex, occupation, education, marital history, and family situation.

The Life Role Salience Scales

The Life Role Salience Scales were initially developed and reported by Amatea and Cross in 1983, as the Life Roles Expectation Scales. Originally, six different sets of items were developed to tap attitudes toward the reward value of and style of commitment to occupational, marital, and parental roles. More recently, Amatea, Cross, Clark, and Bobby (in press) have reported on the refinement of these original scales into 8 scales which they now call the Life Role Salience Scales.

The Life Role Salience Scales (LRSS) are designed to assess men's and women's personal expectations concerning occupational, marital, and parental roles. Design

objectives were to develop an instrument applicable to both men and women and to those people anticipating as well as currently engaged in various roles, and to provide items that reflect attitudinal changes as a result of role-status change. Thus the instrument is designed to reflect both a point-in-time assessment of the relative importance of life roles for men and women as well as reflecting changes in role salience over time. Items are worded as personal beliefs or expectations in order to elicit personal plans and attitudes.

The Life Role Salience Scales were broken down into six subscales: 1) (OV) Occupational Value, 2) (OC) Occupational Commitment, 3) (PV) Parental Value, 4) (PC) Parental Commitment, 5) (MV) Marital Value, and 6) (MC) Marital Commitment. The three major life roles were assessed in terms of two dimensions. The role reward value dimension is indexed in the Life Role Salience Scales by means of statements in which the individual agrees that the role is an important means of self-definition and/or personal satisfaction. The role commitment level dimension is assessed by statements describing the extent to which the person demonstrates a willingness to commit personal resources to develop the role. Further explanation is provided by Amatea, Cross, Clark, and Bobby (in press).

The Life Role Salience Scales consist of 36 items. A Likert-type attitude scale format is utilized, with five

possible choices: 1) disagree, 2) somewhat disagree, 3) neither agree nor disagree, 4) somewhat agree, 5) agree. According to Amatea, Cross, Clark, and Bobby (in press), three studies have been undertaken to establish the validity and reliability of this instrument with a total of 916 subjects. The responses of three diverse groups, undergraduate men and women, academic career women, and employed couples who were parents, were each analyzed separately to determine whether a common set of dimensions existed in the instrument for each group.

The researchers report that the results of these factorial studies indicate that the different role dimensions defined and measured in the Life Role Salience Scales appear to be a common set for both undergraduate student males and females and for employed men and women, and that the six different scale dimensions were supported across the three different sampling populations. The scales have shown an average internal consistency (coefficient alpha) of .79 to .94. The scales appeared only moderately intercorrelated (the median $r = .29$).

As for stability, the scales show correlations of .71 or higher over two administrations separated by a two-week period. The scales have shown, over various administrations, an average intercorrelation among the related role value and commitment scales (e.g., career role value and career role commitment) of approximately

.40 while unrelated scales are only moderately intercorrelated at a median value of .21 (Amatea, Cross, Clark, & Bobby, In Press). Only a small part of the variance associated with any two particular scales appears to be shared, indicating that each scale represents relatively independent dimensions of work and family role salience in the final version of the instrument.

The Marital Communication Inventory

The Marital Communication Inventory (Bienvenu, 1979) is perhaps the most widely recognized and researched self-report measure of marital communication. It is based on the recognition that a positive relationship exists between marital adjustment and a couple's capacity to communicate (Narvan, 1967; Satir, 1964). Communication is defined by the test developer as the way people exchange feelings and meanings as they try to understand one another and come to see problems and differences from the other person's point of view. It is recognized that communication occurs both verbally and nonverbally through listening, silence, and other body language symbols and clues used by persons in giving and receiving meanings (Bienvenu, 1979).

This 46-item scale was developed to measure the process of communication as a product of marital interaction and to give spouses a better insight into the

degree and patterns of communication in their marriage. It is not intended to measure content of communication but concerns itself more with patterns, characteristics, and styles of communication. Among other things, the couple's ability to listen, to understand one another, and to express themselves and their manner of saying things is assessed (Bienvenu, 1979).

The Marital Communication Inventory is a self-report instrument. Subjects are instructed to respond by checking one of four possible choices: "usually," "sometimes," "seldom," or "never." Higher scores indicate better communication. There are equivalent forms for husbands and wives. Using the Spearman-Brown correlation formula with 60 subjects, Bienvenu (1979) reported a split-half correlation coefficient of .93. Rapoport and Rapoport (1976) found a Pearson Product-Moment Test-Retest correlation of .94 ($N = 40$) between pre-wait scores and post-wait scores two months later.

Validity data have also been reported. Collins (1971) contends that the Marital Communication Inventory discriminates between couples without apparent marital difficulties and couples receiving counseling for marital problems. Collins (1971) correlated the Marital Communication Inventory with measures of communication, adjustment, and harmony in married life. With 90 married subjects, there were significant Pearson Product-Moment

correlations between the Marital Communication Inventory and the Primary Communication Inventory, the Marital Adjustment Test (Locke & Wallace, 1959), and the Family Life Questionnaire (Ely, Guernsey, & Stover, 1973).

Relationship Change Scale

The Relationship Change Scale (RCS) was developed by Schlein (1971, in collaboration with Guernsey, to evaluate client reaction to a premarital counseling program. It is designed to be a measure that is sensitive to perceived changes in the quality of a relationship. Questions deal with a variety of areas of positive relationship change such as extent of change in satisfaction, communication, intimacy, sensitivity, openness, and understanding.

The Relationship Change Scale consists of 25 items, scored on a five-point, Likert-type Scale from "much less" to "much greater" (e.g., within the last three months our relationship with each other has become a) much less, b) less, c) unchanged, d) greater, e) much greater). Higher scores indicated more positive change (i.e., a = 1, e = 5). The time interval in the Relationship Change Scale can be altered to suit the needs of the investigator.

When used to evaluate a treatment program, this measure can be used simply as a postmeasure or it can be administered pretreatment and posttreatment. In the latter instance, one compares a retrospective view of change over

the course of intervention with a retrospective view of change over a comparable period of time before treatment began.

Reliability studies have not been conducted with this instrument because the test-retest intervals of the studies utilizing this instrument were relatively longer than the very brief (i.e., days or a week at most) interval required to provide a meaningful test-retest reliability estimate for a measure designed to be sensitive to short-term change. However, evidence for the construct validity of this instrument has been inferred from the fact that both Schlien (1971) and Rapoport (1976) confirmed experimental hypotheses using it. Further evidence of concurrent validity is afforded by the study by Schlien (1971). The Relationship Change Scale correlated with two measures designed to assess specific components of relationship change. With 96 dating couples, there were significant correlations of the Relationship Change Scale with the Handling Problems Change Scale (.29, $p < .01$) and with the Satisfaction Change Scale (.40, $p < .001$), as referenced by Guernsey (1977).

It should be emphasized, that the Relationship Change Scale was originally designed to be utilized in a premarital counseling program. However, it did seem that the content of this instrument and the variable time frame options it utilized, were particularly well adapted to the needs of this study.

Hypotheses

The hypotheses tested in this study were

- Ho 1): There are no significant differences in subjects' work or family role salience, as measured by the Life Role Salience Scales, on the bases of group, gender, or the interaction of group and gender.
- Ho 2): There are no significant differences in subjects' attitudes about their marital communications process as measured by the Marital Communications Inventory, on the basis of group, gender, or the interaction of group and gender.
- Ho 3): There are no significant differences in subjects' expressed satisfaction with the quality of their relationship as measured by the Relationship Change Scale on the basis of group, gender, or the interaction of group and gender.

Analyses of Data

The data from this study were analyzed using two-way analysis of covariance procedures (Roscoe, 1975), with the pretest being used as the covariate. Two-way ANCOVA is a combination of regression and analysis of variance procedures which permits statistical control of the variables. The advantages of using two-way ANCOVA over a simple analysis of variance were that that it made

adjustments for differences within groups, increased the power of the results, and aided in looking for possible interactions between treatment and sex.

CHAPTER IV ANALYSES OF DATA

Introduction

This study was undertaken to assess the impact of a short-term guidance on dual career couples. Criterion instruments were utilized to assess treatment and control group subjects' attitudes regarding 1) their work and family role salience, 2) the quality of their marital communication patterns, and 3) perceptions of change in their satisfaction with their interpersonal relationship.

A total of 40 couples participated in the study. Twenty couples comprised the experimental group and 20 the control group. The study compared the results of a pretest and posttest of the Life Role Salience Scales (LRSS), the Marital Communication Inventory (MCI), and the Relationship Change Scale (RCS). Comparisons by treatment group and by sex were conducted utilizing two-way analysis of covariance procedures. To test each hypothesis it was first necessary to determine if there was a relationship between the covariate and the dependent variable. Only after this was determined for each hypothesis was the hypothesis tested using two-way analysis of covariance procedures.

In this chapter these analyses will be reported in terms of the study's three hypotheses. Prior to reporting these results a description of the couples comprising the sample will be presented. The final portion of the chapter will outline the results of a post hoc analysis of Relationship Change Scale item responses.

Description of the Sample

A summary of the sample utilized in this study is presented in Table 4-1. Descriptive data indicate that the groups were roughly equivalent. The need to establish an equivalence of groups is thus addressed.

A demographic data sheet was included as part of the pretest packet. This questionnaire obtained information about participants' age and sex, as well as some limited background information on their educational, occupational, marital, and familial statuses. Subjects completed the questionnaire prior to participating in the Coupling and Careers program, as part of their pretest packet. A copy of this questionnaire is available in Appendix B.

Both members of all couples utilized in the analyses were presently employed full-time or participating in graduate level studies which required a minimum of 30 hours per week of their time. Some of the individuals sampled ($n = 12$) were combining their graduate schooling with part-time jobs (including graduate

TABLE 4-1
DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF SAMPLE

Group	Age	Length of Marriage	Years Post Baccalaureate
<u>Control</u>			
Range	23-46	1-21	1-8
Mean	33.125	7.75	4.075
S.D.	5.59	5.37	1.64
<u>Treatment</u>			
Range	23-48	1-27	2-8
Mean	30.05	6.55	4.90
S.D.	7.41	6.83	1.34
<u>Male</u>			
Range	23-48	1-27	1-8
Mean	32.25	7.15	4.9
S.D.	6.94	6.18	1.58
<u>Female</u>			
Range	23-47	1-27	1-8
Mean	30.95	7.15	4.075
S.D.	6.48	6.18	1.40

assistantships) that might not be considered professional level work. All subjects had complete bachelor's level degrees. Three individuals were returning to school for retraining in second careers, while their spouses functioned as primary sources of financial support; and four were returning for advanced training in a field where they had already established a career.

The data presented in Table 4-1 appear somewhat skewed by a relatively small number of couples and/or individuals who were considerably above or below the levels of age, education, and length of marriage characteristic to a majority of subjects. There were, for example, only four couples with members under 25 years of age. The same couples had only been married one to three years. On the other hand, five couples had both members over 43 years of age and had been married 19-23 years. Examining educational levels, there were four couples where both members had advanced levels of professional training (i.e., four to five years post-doctoral). These were physicians and university professors in highly specialized fields. Most subjects had finished one year of master's level study and were involved in completing their second year. Taking into account these extremes, the means and standard deviations for the demographic profile reflect a representative range for majority of the sample.

Those individuals employed full-time fell into the following general categories: 1) approximately 20 individuals were university professors, physicians, engineers, or researchers in the biological sciences; 2) 27 individuals were involved in what might be termed the helping professions, that is, social workers, teachers, counselors, nurses, rehabilitation and occupational therapists, church family life coordinators, and ministers; 3) 12 subjects had backgrounds in business related and/or management administrative positions for service companies and agencies in both the public and private sector; and 4) the remainder of had more diverse backgrounds, including computer work, accounting, law enforcement, real estate, banking, and self-employment.

Results of evaluation of the hypotheses were as reported in the sections following

Work and Family Role Salience

Ho 1): There are no significant differences in subjects; work or family role salience, as measured by the Life Role Salience Scales, on the basis of group, gender, or the interaction of group and gender.

Subjects' work and family role salience were measured by means of the Life Role Salience Scales (LRSS). The LRSS

by means of the Life Role Salience Scales (LRSS). The LRSS consists of six subscales: 1) occupational value, 2) occupational commitment, 3) parental value, 4) parental commitment, 5) marital value, and 6) marital commitment. Each subscale was analyzed individually by a two-way analysis of covariance. Each LRSS subscale pretest score was found to be a significant predictor of posttest scores. An alpha of .05 was used. The results of these analyses are now presented in terms of each subscale dimension:

1) Occupational Value--There were no significant differences by group or by gender and no interaction of group and gender in occupational value as measured by the occupational value scale of the LRSS. The computed F scores of 0.53 by group, and 0.22 for interaction of group and gender, were within the critical F limits of 2.00, indicating that the null hypothesis could not be rejected. Although the computed F score of 3.85 for gender exceeded the critical F value, the calculated confidence interval (-0.03, 1.97) contained zero, indicating that the null hypothesis failed to be rejected. These results, along with other LRSS measures, are presented in Tables 4-2 and 4-3.

2) Occupational Commitment--There were no significant differences by group or by gender and no interaction of group and gender in occupational commitment as measured by the occupational commitment scale of the LRSS. The computed F scores of 0.01 by group, and 0.28 for interaction of group

TABLE 4-2
RESULTS OF THE ANALYSIS OF COVARIANCE OF WORK AND FAMILY
ROLE SALIENCE BY GROUP AND BY SEX

Scale	Source of Variation	Degrees of Freedom	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	F
Occupational Value	OV Pre	1	665.92	665.92	153.16
	Treatment	1	2.30	2.30	0.53
	Sex	1	16.72	16.72	3.85
	Treatment*Sex	1	0.96	0.96	0.22
	Error	75	326.10	4.35	
Occupational Commitment	OC Pre	1	265.99	265.99	48.87
	Treatment	1	0.08	0.08	0.01
	Sex	1	1.68	1.68	0.31
	Treatment*Sex	1	1.55	1.55	0.28
	Error	75	408.26	5.44	
Parental Value	PV Pre	1	871.67	871.67	109.96
	Treatment	1	25.84	25.84	3.26
	Sex	1	18.44	18.44	2.33
	Treatment*Sex	1	2.31	2.31	0.29
	Error	75	594.54	7.93	
Parental Commitment	PC Pre	1	727.35	727.35	86.24
	Treatment	1	18.10	18.10	2.15
	Sex	1	4.00	4.00	0.47
	Treatment*Sex	1	22.49	22.49	2.67
	Error	75	623.53	8.43	
Marital Value	MV Pre	1	605.33	605.33	90.83
	Treatment	1	0.84	0.84	0.13
	Sex	1	4.02	4.02	0.60
	Treatment*Sex	1	3.52	3.52	0.53
	Error	75	499.84	6.66	
Marital Commitment	MC Pre	1	317.98	317.98	104.06
	Treatment	1	5.32	5.32	1.75
	Sex	1	1.15	1.15	0.38
	Treatment*Sex	1	2.75	2.75	0.90
	Error	75	229.18	3.06	

and gender and 0.31 by gender were within the critical F limits of 2.00 indicating that the null hypothesis could not be rejected.

3) Parental Value--There were no significant differences by group or by gender and no interaction of group and gender in parental value as measured by the parental value scale of the LRSS. The computed F score of .29 for group by gender interaction indicated that the null hypothesis could not be rejected. The computed F score of 3.26 for group and 2.33 for gender both exceeded critical F limits. However, both calculated confidence intervals, -2.5, .18 for group and -.3, 2.22 for sex contained zero indicating the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

4) Parental Commitment--There were no significant differences by group or by gender and no interaction of group and gender in parental commitment as measured by the parental commitment scale of the LRSS. The computed F scores for group by gender interaction of 2.67 and 2.15 for group both exceeded outside critical F limits. However, the calculated confidence interval of -3.6, 2.24 for group contained zero indicating the null hypothesis should be rejected. The computed F score of 0.47 for gender was within critical limits indicating that the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

5) Marital Value--There were no significant differences by group or by gender and no interaction of group and gender in marital value as measured by the marital value scale of the LRSS. The computed F scores of 0.13 for group, 0.60 for gender,

and 0.53 for group by gender interaction were all within critical F limits indicating the null hypothesis could not be rejected.

6) Marital Commitment--There were no significant differences by group or by gender and no interaction of group and gender in the marital commitment scale of the LRSS. The computed F scores of 1.75 for group, 0.38 for gender, and 0.90 for group by gender interaction were all within critical F limits indicating the null hypothesis could not be rejected.

Quality of Marital Communication Patterns

Ho 2): There are no significant differences in subjects' attitudes about the quality of their marital communication patterns, as measured by the Marital Communication Inventory, on the basis of group, gender, or the interaction of group and gender.

Hypothesis 2 was tested by means of analyzing subjects' evaluation of the quality of their marital communication patterns. Marital communication patterns were assessed utilizing the Marital Communication Inventory (MCI). In this self-report scale each spouse rated their ability to listen, to understand the other, and to express themselves.

A two-way analysis of covariance using the MCI pretest as a covariate was utilized to test this hypothesis. The covariate (MCI pretest) was found to be a significant predictor of the dependent variable (MCI posttest). The alpha level was set at the .05 level of significance.

TABLE 4-3
RESULTS OF THE ANALYSIS OF COVARIANCE ON WORK AND FAMILY
ROLE SALIENCE MEAN AND ADJUSTED MEAN SCORES
BY GROUP AND BY SEX

Scale	Condition	N	Pre		Post		Adjusted
			M	SD	M	SD	M
Occupational Value	Experimental	40	17.18	3.25	17.22	3.26	16.70
	Control	40	15.88	3.42	15.78	3.27	16.30
	Males	40	17.70	2.90	17.93	2.63	16.98
	Females	40	15.35	3.45	15.08	3.85	16.02
Occupational Commitment	Experimental	40	20.93	2.48	20.70	2.40	21.04
	Control	40	21.95	2.89	21.45	3.37	21.11
	Males	40	22.20	2.21	21.73	2.64	21.22
	Females	40	20.68	3.00	20.43	3.09	20.93
Parental Value	Experimental	40	18.70	3.83	19.38	3.71	19.88
	Control	40	19.90	4.30	19.23	5.01	18.72
	Males	40	19.03	4.09	19.55	4.31	19.78
	Females	40	19.58	4.13	19.05	4.48	18.82
Parental Commitment	Experimental	40	16.33	2.96	16.43	3.27	16.17
	Control	40	15.73	3.95	16.85	5.03	17.11
	Males	40	14.60	2.69	15.18	3.58	16.40
	Females	40	17.45	3.63	18.10	4.34	16.88
Marital Value	Experimental	40	17.78	4.10	18.48	3.44	19.09
	Control	40	19.43	3.34	19.88	3.96	19.26
	Males	40	19.53	3.36	19.63	3.66	18.94
	Females	40	17.68	4.04	18.73	3.84	19.41
Marital Commitment	Experimental	40	18.90	2.89	19.53	2.47	20.42
	Control	40	21.88	2.57	21.90	2.30	21.00
	Males	40	20.40	3.18	20.60	2.53	20.59
	Females	40	20.38	3.06	20.83	2.80	20.83

The null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in subjects' attitudes regarding the quality of their marital communication patterns, as measured by the MCI, failed to be rejected. The computed F scores of 1.32 by group, 0.05 by gender, and 0.02 for group by gender interaction, were all well within the critical F limits of 2.00. These results are reported in Tables 4-4 and 4-5.

Perceptions of Relationship Change

Ho 3): There are no significant differences in subjects' expressed satisfaction with their interpersonal relationship, as measured by the Relationship Change Scale, on the basis of group, gender, or the interaction of group and gender.

Hypothesis 3 was tested by means of utilizing subjects' perceptions of change in and/or expressed satisfaction with the quality of their interpersonal relationship. Perceptions of change in relationship quality were measured by the Relationship Change Scale (RCS). Items on the RCS assessed subjects' attitudes regarding changes in the quality of the couples' communication, their levels of intimacy, and their understanding of and sensitivity to their own and their mates' feelings. Higher scores are thought to indicate positive changes in various aspects of the relationship.

A two-way analysis of covariance, using the RCS pretest as the covariate, was utilized to test this hypothesis. The RCS pretest was found to be a significant predictor of the

TABLE 4-4
RESULTS OF THE ANALYSIS OF COVARIANCE ON SUBJECTS' EVALUATION
OF THE QUALITY OF THEIR MARITAL COMMUNICATION
BY GROUP AND BY SEX

Source of Variation	Degrees of Freedom	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	F
MCI Pre	1	14344.73	14344.73	229.97
Treatment	1	82.37	82.37	1.32
Sex	1	3.17	3.17	0.05
Treatment*Sex	1	1.44	1.44	0.02
Error	75	4378.25	62.38	

TABLE 4-5
MEAN AND ADJUSTED MEAN SCORES FOR RESULTS OF THE ANALYSIS
OF COVARIANCE ON SUBJECTS' EVALUATION OF THE QUALITY
OF THEIR MARITAL COMMUNICATION BY GROUP AND BY SEX

Condition	MCI Pre		SD	MCI Post		Adjusted M
	N	M		M	SD	
Experimental	40	90.55	16.86	94.05	13.29	99.59
Control	40	105.98	15.92	107.40	14.90	101.87
Males	40	96.98	15.92	99.60	15.10	100.53
Females	40	99.55	18.34	101.85	16.11	100.92

dependent variable (RCS posttest). The alpha level was set at the .05 level of significance.

The null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between experimental and control groups' expressed satisfaction with their interpersonal relationship was rejected. The computed F score of 8.86 was beyond the critical F limit of 2.00. The null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between male and female subjects failed to be rejected because the computed F score of 1.17 did not exceed the critical F limit of 2.00. Also, no significant interaction between treatment and sex was noted, as the F score of .49 was within the critical limit. These results are depicted in Tables 4-6 and 4-7.

The Relationship Change Scale (RCS) was the one criterion instrument on which significant results were obtained. Specifically, these differences were between experimental and control group subjects. Since the RCS measures several different dimensions of interpersonal interaction, a post hoc item analysis was undertaken to determine more specifically what areas of couple relations seemed to be significantly affected.

To analyze these results further, a series of related t tests were done on each item of the RCS. These tests reflect differences pretesting to posttesting for each of the four groups (i.e., experimental and control; male and female) but do not measure differences between groups. Only three items showed significant change for control subjects, whereas

TABLE 4-6
RESULTS OF THE ANALYSIS OF COVARIANCE OF PERCEIVED
RELATIONSHIP CHANGE BY GROUP AND BY SEX

Source of Variation	Degrees of Freedom	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	F
RCS Pre	1	767.77	767.77	11.65
Treatment	1	583.60	583.60	8.86
Sex	1	77.05	77.05	1.17
Treatment*Sex	1	32.59	32.59	0.49
Error	75	4941.28	65.88	

TABLE 4-7
MEAN AND ADJUSTED MEAN SCORES FOR RESULTS OF THE ANALYSIS
OF COVARIANCE OF PERCEIVED RELATIONSHIP CHANGE BY GROUP AND BY SEX

Condition	N	RCS Pre		RCS Post		Adjusted M
		M	SD	M	SD	
Experimental	40	84.55	9.44	90.68	8.19	90.51
Control	40	83.65	7.50	84.95	8.97	85.11
Males	40	83.28	8.49	88.50	9.80	88.80
Females	40	94.93	8.50	87.13	8.20	86.83

nine items showed significant change (in positive directions) for experimental group subjects. Those items on which experimental and control groups changed significantly fell into the following general areas: 1) how the individual feels he/she is viewed as a partner (more satisfactorily); 2) how mate views him/herself (more satisfactorily); 3) abilities to listen and communicate (better able); 4) ability to express self (better able); 5) general satisfaction with relationship (more satisfied); 6) ability to handle disagreement (better able); 7) understanding of the kind of relationship I want to have in the future with my spouse (better understanding). A complete statistical summary of the RCS items showing significant change by group are listed in Tables 4-8 and 4-10. A complete copy of the RCS is available in Appendix C.

Significant differences were evident between male and female subjects on the related t tests of items on the RCS. Female treatment group subjects showed significant change on only one item. It concerned a positive change in ability to constructively express negative feelings toward their partner. Male treatment subjects reported significant positive changes on nine items that related to improved perceptions of how their spouse viewed them, how they viewed themselves, and how they were able to express themselves and communicate generally in addition to their ability to handle disagreement. Generally male mean scores tended to come up at posttesting

toward pretest levels of the females (who showed considerably less pretest to posttest change). A complete statistical summary of the RCS items showing significant differences by sex are listed in Tables 4-9 and 4-11. A complete copy of the RCS is available in Appendix C.

TABLE 4-3
 RELATIONSHIP CHANGE SCALE ITEM SCORES BY GROUP
 RELATED SAMPLE t TEST

Item Number	Control Group t Scores	Experimental Group t Scores
1	1.43	0.00
2	0.81	0.00
3	2.36*	1.92
4	1.71	0.75
5	2.82*	1.43
6	0.00	3.60*
7	-0.57	1.75
8	-0.33	1.60
9	0.00	2.88*
10	0.50	0.89
11	-0.47	1.67
12	-1.64	2.22*
13	0.00	0.89
14	0.72	3.20*
15	-0.57	1.43
16	2.68*	0.53
17	1.71	2.24*
18	0.27	5.34*
19	-1.86	1.22
20	-0.94	0.68
21	1.84	4.65
22	0.00	1.60*
23	0.83	-0.72
24	1.36	2.97*
25	-0.40	2.73*

* = t scores significant at .05 level.

TABLE 4-9
 RELATIONSHIP CHANGE SCALE ITEM SCORES BY SEX
 RELATED SAMPLE t TEST

Item Number	Males t Scores	Females t Scores
1	1.42	0.16
2	0.52	0.21
3	2.48*	1.67
4	0.75	1.71
5	2.04	2.05
6	2.50*	1.15
7	2.24*	-0.96
8	1.15	0.50
9	3.40*	-0.50
10	0.77	0.65
11	0.60	0.72
12	1.84	-0.65
13	0.00	1.07
14	2.32*	1.64
15	1.86	-0.77
16	1.71	0.77
17	3.78*	0.60
18	3.64*	1.95
19	0.47	-1.07
20	1.09	-1.52
21	3.16	3.16
22	1.95*	0.21*
23	0.00	0.00
24	2.48	1.96
25	2.56*	0.00

* = t scores significant at .05 level.

TABLE 4-10
SAMPLE MEANS RELATIONSHIP CHANGE SCALE
ITEM SCORES BY GROUP

Item Number*	N	Pretest		Posttest	
		Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
<u>Control</u>					
3	40	3.075	0.616	3.325	0.656
5	40	3.200	0.564	3.525	0.679
16	40	3.075	0.572	3.300	0.608
<u>Experimental</u>					
6	40	3.350	0.622	3.775	0.480
9	40	3.400	0.590	3.750	0.494
12	40	3.275	0.599	3.550	0.552
14	40	3.225	0.660	3.600	0.496
17	40	3.200	0.564	3.525	0.640
18	40	3.150	0.580	3.775	0.480
22	40	3.050	0.552	3.550	0.552
24	40	2.875	0.648	3.325	0.797
25	40	3.450	0.783	3.850	0.427

*Items with t scores significant at .05 level.

TABLE 4-11
SAMPLE MEANS RELATIONSHIP CHANGE SCALE
ITEM SCORES BY SEX

Item Number*	N	Pretest		Posttest	
		Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
<u>Males</u>					
3	40	3.075	0.572	3.400	0.810
6	40	3.275	0.599	3.575	0.549
7	40	3.325	0.572	3.575	0.594
9	40	3.275	0.599	3.675	0.526
14	40	3.275	0.599	3.550	0.504
17	40	3.100	0.591	3.475	0.599
18	40	3.125	0.563	3.575	0.594
22	40	3.000	0.392	3.350	0.533
25	40	3.000	0.599	3.350	0.580
<u>Females</u>					
22	40	3.125	0.607	3.475	0.554

*Items with t scores significant at .05 level.

CHAPTER V
SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This study investigated the effects of a short-term guidance program for dual career couples. Using analysis of covariance procedures, this study compared the results of a pretest and posttest of subjects' attitudes regarding 1) the salience of their work and family roles, 2) the quality of their marital communication patterns, and 3) perceptions of change in their satisfaction with their interpersonal relationship.

Experimental group subjects did not differ significantly from control group subjects in their attitudes regarding the salience of work and family roles, or the perceived quality of their marital communication patterns from pretesting to posttesting. Significant differences in the quality and the extent of their interpersonal exchange, and their overall satisfaction with their relationship were noted between experimental and control groups. Analyses of these outcomes in terms of an interaction by group and by sex revealed no significant

differences between male and female subjects on any of the three outcome measures.

Discussion of Results

No statistically significant differences were noted between either the experimental or control groups on the work and family role values and/or commitments, as measured by the Life Role Salience Scales, from pretesting to posttesting. First, in both experimental and control groups, males and females tended to show rather traditional expectations regarding work, marriage, and family roles. That is, males tended to have stronger career orientations, with this role maintaining primacy over marital and family involvements. Females were generally career-oriented to a lesser extent.

Following participation in the workshop, some slight but nonsignificant changes were noted in both male and female role expectations; for example, male participants indicated some willingness to moderate their career commitments to devote more time and energy to marital roles, while some female participants indicated a greater willingness to share family role responsibilities in order to have time and energy for their careers. It may be that changes did not impact substantially the original work and family role values to affect work

and family role salience for dual career couples. Another possibility is that the Life Role Salience Scales instrument was not sensitive enough to record such subtle shifts in role values and commitments. An alternative interpretation may be that it was unrealistic to expect that such basic attitudes regarding sex role values would change significantly as a result of a brief intervention.

The Marital Communication Inventory also showed no statistically significant differences between experimental and control group subjects in terms of their description of the quality of their marital communication patterns. There are several possible explanations for this result. First, the workshop included only one two-hour segment on couple problem solving and decision making. It may be presumptuous to think that existing communication patterns can be altered with such a brief intervention or over such a short period of time.

Secondly, the Marital Communication Inventory may have been an inappropriate choice of criterion instrument to detect significant changes in couples' communication patterns. Since the Marital Communication Inventory was designed to aid couples in reflecting on their marital communication process, it may access general perceptions of communication processes which are less subject to change over time.

Significant differences between experimental and control groups were noted in the extent of perceived change in the quality of their relationships, as measured by the Relationship Change Scale. Post hoc analyses of the Relationship Change Scale have been reviewed in Chapter IV and revealed that the experimental groups changed significantly from the control groups in terms of their more positive ratings of the following general areas:

- 1) how the individual feels he/she is viewed as a partner (more satisfactorily);
- 2) how mate views him/her self (more satisfactorily);
- 3) abilities to listen and communicate (better able);
- 4) ability to express self (better able);
- 5) general satisfaction with relationship (more satisfied);
- 6) ability to handle disagreement (better able);
- 7) understanding of the kind of relationship I want to have in the future with my spouse (better understanding).

Although no significant differences were evident between male and female subjects on the related t tests of items on the Relationship Change Scale, several interesting shifts were noted. Female treatment group subjects showed significant change on one item concerning a positive change in their ability to constructively express negative feelings toward their partner. Male treatment subjects reported significant positive changes on eight items that related to improved perceptions of how their spouse

viewed them, how they viewed themselves, and how they were able to express themselves and communicate.

A number of explanations can be posited for why the treatment produced a significant outcome of the Relationship Change Scale and not for the Life Role Salience Scales or the Marital Communication Inventory. First, the Life Role Salience Scales are designed to reflect changes in attitudes and values regarding work, marriage, and family roles that have been shaped through many years of socialization processes. Subjects' models for work, family, and sex role participation are likely to evolve in response to a variety of individual family backgrounds, values, social orientations, and life experiences. It seems unlikely that participation in such a brief intervention as the Counseling and Careers program would be likely to influence significantly or quickly attitudes, values, or role models that have taken many years to formulate.

The Marital Communication Inventory is designed to measure patterns, processes, and issues involved in marital communication. These patterns of interpersonal exchange also seem to be established gradually by the couple and are not likely to be easily or significantly influenced by such a brief experience. Again, there seem to be attitudes, sex role orientations, emotions, and certain skills involved in couple communication which

may render these patterns more resistant to showing significant, short-term change.

The Relationship Change Scale tends to reflect more general feelings and perceptions about how couples view themselves, one another and their process of interpersonal exchange. Since specific attitudes, values, or skills are not measured by the scale, it stands to reason that it might be more likely to reflect short-term changes produced by a brief intervention experience that seems to involve high levels of personal/interpersonal exchange.

The Coupling and Careers program is delivered through a small group format by a counselor who is skilled in promoting intimate interpersonal exchange of thoughts and feelings. It may be, then, that subjects responded positively to the medium or process through which the intervention was delivered rather than the actual content or curriculum of the workshop. Couples were able to spend a good deal of time together exchanging thoughts and feelings in a structured, positive experience. Most of the couples reported that they rarely had time to spend with one another or other couples involved in a similar lifestyle, and found the time spent during the workshop quite valuable. It seemed to be a great source of relief and support for couples to meet others like themselves who were experiencing similar difficulties in managing the multiple demands of a dual career lifestyle.

Thus, it may be that it was the time couples were able to spend with one another and others like themselves, in what they felt was a positive, intimate exchange of thoughts and feelings, that produced significant improvements in their interpersonal relations. These improvements seem to be reflected by the changes evident on the Relationship Change Scale.

Discussion of the Intervention

These findings need to be considered in light of several features encountered in the implementation of this study. These features will be discussed and changes suggested.

The majority of participants in this study were in their mid-twenties to mid-thirties. Limitations were not placed on age and ethnic composition of groups. As expected, participants were exclusively white, educated, and middle class. Some questions related to potential generalizability of results to different age or racial groups must therefore be asked. Also, the limited sample size ($n = 40$ couples), though an improvement over prior research on this program, limits the generalizability of the results.

It appears that many of the dual career couples solicited for participation in this program had time and energy commitments that made it difficult for them to

think about taking 10 or more hours for a workshop even if it addressed problems particular to their lifestyle. The actual participants were somewhat different from the population expected. It was anticipated that many younger couples would participate. Instead, subjects tended to be older (e.g., 25-35) and somewhat more established in their marriage (e.g., six to seven years). The limited participation of younger dual career couples may have been the result of many things. One possibility is that such younger couples may have found it difficult to anticipate potential difficulties in their lifestyles. It also may be that couples who were involved for some length of time in the dual career lifestyle had experienced first-hand some stresses from the lifestyle which they were motivated to resolve.

Several groups consisted of individuals at very different stages of career, marriage, and family development. This did not seem problematic, but rather beneficial, most of the time. Maturational and personality differences were more difficult to handle. These differences may have been exaggerated by the small group format that was utilized to deliver the Coupling and Careers program since the program depended on couples in the groups interacting with and assisting one another.

The fact that this intervention was delivered as a weekend intensive may have limited its impact or ability to change participants' attitudes and behavior. Both delivering the program in shorter segments over a more extended period of time and asking participants to spend more time in the program presented logistical difficulties. However, such a brief, one-shot program with no comprehensive follow-up may not produce significant change in participants' attitudes or behaviors. Perhaps it can at best result in some slight attitudinal changes.

Since participation in the study required a high level of time and energy investment, subjects may have been prone to want to see outcomes as beneficial and significant. It was also possible that pretesting shaped participants' propensity to report possible changes in a way that fit the content and format of the instruments used (e.g., work and family role priorities change due to this program, or, our communication should improve, etc.). Also, due to the time and energy involved, subjects could have been more prone to see the intervention as positively affecting their relationships. There is also the possibility that this "volunteer" sample was not representative of the dual career population at large.

Finally, the design utilized a follow-up posttesting several weeks after subjects had completed the experimental intervention in an attempt to assess the

durability of any measurable program effects. The four-week period utilized may be too short a period of time for significant changes to be evident. Given that the sample for this study was older and more established in their dual career marriage, it may be that they alter their patterns of interaction and their role orientations more slowly than younger couples and require a longer incubation period prior to accepting new ideas or demonstrating attitudinal and behavioral changes. Thus, such changes might not be measured by this study's time frame and/or criterion instruments.

Certain assumptions concerning how individuals might be impacted by the intervention shaped outcome instrumentation selection. However, it is possible that changes not operationalized or measured with these instruments could have been occurring. It is also possible that changes from the effects of the program may not have been properly identified and operationalized through the study design.

Thus, although significant changes in work and family role salience or couple communication patterns were not found, some significant changes in participants' attitudes about self and one's spouse were noted. For

example, it appeared that some participants' appreciation for how the quality of their marital relationship affected their career and family role performance increased. That is, they found that the more satisfying and mutually fulfilling they could make their marital relationship through increased communication and compromise, the better able they were to handle the additional stresses put on them by their work and family role demands. Therefore, one outcome (which was not measured directly) might have been availability of quality social support resources.

The ability to communicate and compromise in order to accurately perceive one another's point of view, handle disagreements, and share role responsibilities was increasingly viewed as valuable. Couples appeared to grow more committed to investing energy in strengthening their relationship and increasing their ability to work together rather than in competition with one another. Where they had come into the program very problem-oriented, seeking specific solutions to specific stresses, many were more able to see the importance of supporting one another and of asking for assistance from those around them.

In addition, during the workshop many participants appeared to recognize that they did not engage in many self-nurturing activities and took care of themselves only when they had taken care of all of the other demands pressing them. The realization that they needed to spend

some time in self-nurturing activities, with the realization that these must be scheduled, seemed to emerge. Indices of strain symptoms or stress-reduction strategies and practices might be considered for inclusion in future research outcomes on the Coupling and Careers program. Further content on time management might also be considered for inclusion within the program.

Perhaps the most striking outcome observed in some subjects was the impact interaction with other couples had on participants. Couples shared strategies with one another for dealing with specific predicaments and heard how other couples involved in the same lifestyle had similar problems (and no ready answers). Hearing from other couples seemed to normalize participants' difficulties, to relieve some negative feelings, and to provide much needed support. This was borne out by the fact that several of the workshop participant groups subsequently formed continuing support groups and/or continued to interact with one another socially. This seems especially relevant since before, many participants indicated that their socializing was almost exclusively related to their professional endeavors.

Thus, an outcome in terms of attitudes about one's social support resources might be an index to utilize in formulating outcomes to evaluate further research.

In summary, no significant differences were reported between experimental and control or male and female group subjects on the Life Role Salience Scales. However, there appeared to be subtle changes in participants' attitudes toward work, marital, and family roles. It may be that the instrumentation utilized was not sufficiently powerful or refined to record these. In addition, the intervention may have been too brief to significantly affect them. Finally, insufficient time between pretesting and posttesting may have elapsed to record such changes. No significant differences were noted between experimental and control or male and female subjects on the Marital Communication Inventory. This instrument may have been an inappropriate choice to measure quantitative changes in communication skills as it is more qualitative and process oriented. The teaching of specific communication skills may also have been insufficiently addressed in the Coupling and Careers program, as the time given it was limited. Changes in perceptual accuracy may have been a more appropriate outcome to select.

The Relationship Change Scale did show significant differences between experimental and control but not between male and female subjects. This instrument seemed particularly well suited to this study as it tended to reflect generalized changes in attitudes, perceptions, and satisfactions of spouses in their relationship. Scale

items reflected improvement in couples' communication, perceptual accuracy, self-understanding and ability to handle disagreement showed changes among experimental subjects from pretesting to posttesting.

Some informal observations have been discussed in relation to the intervention and some preliminary recommendations for further research made. There were some limitations in the design and methodology of this study. Those noted have fallen into three general areas 1) those related to the nature of the population and sample, 2) those related to instrumentation and outcome measurement, and 3) those related to the research design. Any further limitations noted will be discussed in the following section, in conjunction with recommendations for further research.

Recommendations for Further Research

Looking at different outcomes, further research on impacts of the program may necessitate the utilization of an alternative means of assessing life role salience. Other options include inventories developed by Super (1980) and Greenhaus (1973). It is also possible that as the Life Role Salience Scales continue to be refined, they may become sensitive enough to record some of the more subtle values that were observed in participants'

work and family role expectations. Since role values, attitudes, and commitments tend to change slowly, over relatively extended periods of time, another option might be the development of a more concrete, behaviorally based measure. Such a measure could take the form of an activity checklist or a behavior log where subjects kept track of the amount of time they spent at activities related to performance of specific work, marriage, and family role functions. However, it might still be necessary to address attitudes and role reward values in some way if such a measure was used.

The Marital Communication Inventory did not seem to be an appropriate instrument for measuring outcomes of this program. It is suggested that further research might utilize an instrument such as the Relationship Issues Checklist that measures perceptual accuracy rather than communication process or communication skills. The Relationship Issues Checklist was used in the pilot studies of the Coupling and Careers program with some success.

The specific teaching of communication skills within the context of this program may not be appropriate or valuable to participants since there does not seem to be adequate time to do a thorough job of presenting the material involved and rehearsing alternative styles. An abbreviated presentation seems to produce more confusion than productive

change. The more specific decision-making and problem-solving strategies presented in the workshop seemed to be better incorporated by participants and should perhaps be given more time.

The Relationship Change Scale did seem to be an appropriate instrument for measuring outcomes of this program. As previously mentioned, it is a more general measure which taps a number of relationship concerns including communication, intimacy, mutual understanding, and overall relationship satisfaction. It is also well suited to a delayed posttesting design as the time frame utilized in its items can be altered to suit the needs of the researcher (e.g., within the last _____ my satisfaction with myself has been a) much less, b) less, c) unchanged, d) more, e) much more). It is recommended that this instrument be utilized in further studies of this program.

Certain recommendations concerning delivery and format are important. First, the role of group leader seems to be critical. The leader should be a trained counselor with good skills in handling small group dynamics since so much of this program depends on constructive interaction between and within couples; there is little doubt that process is at least as important as content. The question of group composition, i.e., whether or not it is beneficial to have couples in the

same group who are at very different levels of maturational and developmental stage in the evolution of their career, marital, and family roles, remains open. Second, it is possible that the program might be better delivered in small segments over a prolonged period of time (e.g., 2½-hour sessions over a four to five week period) which would allow participants to process information more gradually, and to try out skills, alternative behaviors, and ways of managing their dual career predicaments.

It does seem to be valuable for couples to come back to the group and process what they have tried. Another suggestion in this vein is that future researchers utilize "follow-up" groups. This was done on a limited basis in this study, at the participants' request. When groups came back together a month or two following completion of the program, they often saw the material in a different light. They had reflected and experimented with alternative behavior and management styles which they were eager to share with one another.

Further research could certainly benefit from the use of a larger sample size, although as previously noted, recruiting couples to participate in the workshop is a definite problem. It is also recommended that a delayed posttesting design be utilized again, but that the posttest be administered after a

longer period of time (perhaps two to three months) than the four-week time frame used in this study. This also poses considerable logistical difficulties.

Alternative methods for grouping and analyzing the data might also be considered. It might be fruitful for further research to utilize individual treatment groups as the basic unit for data analysis rather than simply comparing experimental and control and/or male and female subjects. Such groups by group comparisons could yield valuable information on how group composition may affect results. Questions of whether it is beneficial to have within the same group couples and/or individuals at varying chronological, maturational, or developmental stages in their work, marriage, and family development might thereby be addressed. Couple by couple comparisons utilizing demographic variables such as age, professional orientation, developmental stage, years married, etc., might also provide fruitful results.

In summary, these results suggest that a short-term guidance program for dual career couples had no statistically significant impact on either male or female subjects' work and family role values or their attitudes regarding the quality of their marital communication. However, the Coupling and Careers program did result in significant changes, in positive directions, in participants' expressed satisfaction with their relationships.

The fact that more significant changes were not evident for participants in the Coupling and Career program may in itself be significant. It may be that such an intervention cannot significantly affect couples' abilities to handle more effectively the predicaments often presented by this lifestyle. It may also be that alternative outcomes and some different means of evaluation need to be utilized further research. It does seem that further investigation of and research on programs such as Coupling and Careers might be worthwhile. Further consideration in regard to designating and evaluating outcomes could be important to future research. Revisions in program content and the delivery format may also need to be made.

APPENDIX A
DUAL CAREER COUPLES WORKSHOP: OUTLINE OF
GOALS AND ACTIVITIES

Session I - Examining the Dual Career Lifestyle:

Potential Issues and Stresses

Session Goals:

1. To present a rationale for the program and clarify program goals and procedures
2. To develop group cohesion and identify common concerns
3. To initiate participants' exploration of personal role expectations
4. To increase participants' critical awareness of the benefits and costs of the dual career lifestyle

Session Activities:

1. Program introduction, people introductions, identify common concerns, and processing
2. Exploration of personal expectations and introduction to timeline (activity)
3. Presentation of common dual career dilemmas and group discussion

Session II

Session Goals:

1. To increase participants' awareness of the array of strategies available for dealing with the stresses and choices of the dual career lifestyle
2. To increase participants' awareness of their personal style of coping with role conflict and overload
3. To further clarify participants' expectations regarding their own and their mate's role performance

Session Activities:

1. Overview
2. Putting self into a future reality (a future Friday activity); includes setting the scene, planning your day, planning together, processing and reality factors
3. Surfacing role conflict; real day fantasy, ideal day fantasy, and examining real/ideal day discrepancies
4. Assessing your coping style; inventorying current coping practices and interpreting coping style.

Session III - Clarifying and Prioritizing Self Expectations

Session Goals:

1. To identify common role reevaluation strategies
2. To explore participants' personal role expectations and the values ascribed to each
3. To develop skills in prioritizing competing life role expectations and commitments

Session Activities:

1. Overview
2. Prioritizing: a personal reevaluation strategy; assumptions; clarifying values and priorities (Inventory of Life Roles activity); creating a set of personal priorities; and examining couple priorities.

Session IV - Joint Decision Making as a Dual Career Couple

Session Goals:

1. To acquaint participants with different styles of joint decision making
2. To introduce participants to the joint problem-solving process
3. To assist participants in developing basic communication skills in sharing self.

Session Activities:

1. Overview
2. Common decision-making styles
3. The joint problem-solving process
4. Sharing self

Session V - Building a Collaborative Relationship

Session Goals:

1. To assist participants in examining their personal beliefs and behaviors which can hamper clear communication
2. To assist participants in developing the communication skills necessary in developing effective marital relationships

Session Activities:

1. Overview
2. Common pitfalls in intimate relating
3. Checking out and validating each other's viewpoints: identifying common needs and wants; brainstorming possible alternatives
4. Designing and testing solutions
5. Wrap up

APPENDIX B
DATA SHEET

Age _____ Sex _____

I. OCCUPATIONAL

1. What is your occupation?

Title: _____

Type of work: _____

How long have you worked in your field? _____

Approximately how many hours per week do you devote to your job? _____

2. What was the last year of schooling you completed?

B.S. _____ Graduate/Professional _____

Masters _____ Other (Please specify) _____

3. Where do you see yourself in the development of your present career or field of work? Read the following career phase descriptions and check which phase you feel you are now in. Please complete in terms of your present work field.

_____ Establishing (see myself as "starting out" in my career)

_____ Expanding (see myself as being recognized by others as a person who has acquired some expertise or knowledge)

_____ Maintaining (see myself as putting in time/energy to maintain myself in my work position but less interested in expanding)

_____ Redirecting Work Effort (see myself making a major change in my career in order to meet changing personal values, or external demands)

4. Given the phase of development of your career and your current job situation, how demanding do you feel your current work/career situation is of your time and energies?

Not Very Demanding

1

2

3

4

Extremely Demanding

5

II. MARITAL RELATIONSHIP

1. a) How many years have you been married to your present spouse?
 b) Is this your first marriage? yes no
2. Where do you see yourself in terms of the current development of your marriage? Check the following alternative which best represents your thinking regarding your marriage at the present time.
 - Beginning Marriage (discovering the realities of sharing a life with someone else, "learning the ropes" of being married, beginning to think, feel, and decide with someone else "in the picture")
 - Establishing Marriage (recognizing self as a part of a collaborative partnership, developing and/or managing the demands in the relationship for contact and renewal)
 - Detached Marriage (see myself as somewhat removed from the demands of my marriage, looking for my rewards in other life activities)
3. Given the state of your current marriage relationship situation, how demanding of your time, energy, and concerns do you consider this role to be?

<u>Not Very Demanding</u>				<u>Extremely Demanding</u>
1	2	3	4	5

III. FAMILY SITUATION

1. Do you have children? yes no
 If yes, please by relationship status (e.g., step-daughter adopted son, etc.) and age:

<u>Relationship Status</u>	<u>Age</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
2. How would you describe your current family situation? Below are listed several different phases of family life. Please check the stage which describes you and your family most appropriately at the present time.
 - Without Children (do not plan to have children)
 - Before Children (plan to have children, but have none currently)
 - Preschool Children (am currently involved in rearing young child(ren) with the majority being preschool age range of zero to five years)
 - School Age Children (am currently involved in rearing child(ren) most of whom are school age and none of whom are now teenagers)

- _____ Teenage Children (am involved in rearing at least one child(ren) age 13 to 20, the majority of whom are not out on their own)
- _____ Young Adult Children (most of my children, e.g., all but one, are either out on their own in advance training or job situations or attempting to be so)
- _____ Grown Children (have children who are now grown. Find myself dealing with them or their children.)

3. How demanding a time is your family life now for you?
- | | | | | |
|---------------------------|---|---|---|----------------------------|
| <u>Not Very Demanding</u> | | | | <u>Extremely Demanding</u> |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
4. Think about all the life roles in which you are currently involved. Rate the following combinations of life roles in terms of the amount of internal conflict each creates for you at this time in your life. Circle one of the following four options: 1) causes no conflict, 2) slight conflict, 3) moderate, 4) high internal conflict.
- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|--------------------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Worker vs. Parent Roles |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Parent vs. Spouse Roles |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Spouse vs. Worker Roles |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Parent vs. Time/Space for Self |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Spouse vs. Time/Space for Self |

APPENDIX C
RELATIONSHIP CHANGE SCALE

This is a questionnaire to determine whether, and in what ways, your relationship with your partner has changed in the last four weeks. Please complete the statements by underlining the phrase that most accurately completes each statement. Please give as accurate and honest an account of your own feelings and beliefs as possible.

Your answers will be held in strictest confidence.

1. Within the last four weeks, my satisfaction with myself as a person has become: a) much less; b) less; c) unchanged; d) greater; e) much greater.
2. Within the last four weeks, my satisfaction with my partner as a person has become: a) much less; b) less; c) unchanged; d) greater; e) much greater.
3. Within the last four weeks, I feel my mate views me as a satisfactory partner: a) much less; b) less; c) no change; d) more; e) much more.
4. Within the last four weeks, my mate views herself (himself) with satisfaction as a person: a) much less; b) less; c) no change; d) more; e) much more.
5. Within the last four weeks, our relationship with each other has become a) much worse; b) worse; c) unchanged; d) better; e) much better.
6. In comparison with four weeks ago, I am clearly aware of my partner's needs and desires: a) much less; b) less; c) no change; d) more; e) much more.
7. In comparison with four weeks ago, I understand my own feelings: a) much less; b) less; c) no differently; d) more; e) much more.

8. In comparison with four weeks ago, I understand my partner's feelings: a) much less; b) less; c) no differently; d) more; e) much more.
9. In comparison with four weeks ago, our ability to communicate has become: a) much worse; b) worse; c) unchanged; d) better; e) much better.
10. In comparison with four weeks ago, my sensitivity towards my partner as a person is: a) much less; b) less; c) unchanged; d) more; e) much more.
11. In comparison with four weeks ago, my concern and warmth toward my partner has become: a) much less; b) less; c) unchanged; d) more; e) much more.
12. In comparison with four weeks ago, my self-expression and openness in relation to my partner has become: a) much less; b) less; c) unchanged; d) more; e) much more.
13. In comparison with four weeks ago, my ability to understand my partner's feelings is: a) much less; b) less; c) unchanged; d) more; e) much more.
14. In comparison with four weeks ago, my listening abilities with my partner are: a) much worse; b) worse; c) unchanged; d) better; e) much better.
15. In comparison with four weeks ago, my trust in my partner is: a) much less; b) less; c) unchanged; d) more; e) much more.
16. In comparison with four weeks ago, my feelings of intimacy with my partner are: a) much less; b) less; c) unchanged; d) more; e) much more.
17. In comparison with four weeks ago, my confidence in our relationship is: a) much less; b) less; c) unchanged; d) more; e) much more.
18. In comparison with four weeks ago, our ability to handle disagreements constructively is: a) much less; b) less; c) no different; d) greater; e) much greater.
19. In comparison with four weeks ago, my difficulty in talking with my partner is: a) much less; b) less; c) unchanged; d) less; e) much less.
20. In comparison with four weeks ago, my ability to express positive feelings toward my partner is: a) much less; b) less; c) unchanged; d) greater; e) much greater.

21. In comparison with four weeks ago, my ability to constructively express negative feelings toward my partner is: a) much less; b) less; c) unchanged; d) greater; e) much greater.
22. In comparison with four weeks ago, my capacity to deal constructively with negative feelings my partner expresses toward me is: a) much less; b) less; c) unchanged; d) greater; e) much greater.
23. In comparison with four weeks ago, my capacity to believe and accept positive feelings my partner expresses toward me is: a) much less; b) less; c) unchanged; d) greater; e) much greater.
24. In comparison with four weeks ago, my capacity to deal constructively with negative feelings my partner expresses toward me is: a) much less; b) less; c) unchanged; d) greater; e) much greater.
25. In comparison with four weeks ago, my understanding of the kind of relationship I want to have in the future with my partner is: a) much less; b) less; c) unchanged; d) greater; e) much greater.

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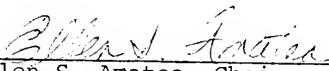
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Dave Brown Wortley is the eldest son of Dr. John and Elenor Brown Wortley. He is married to Maryann Wortley, and has a son, Seth, who was born on the morning of the proposal seminar for this project and who is totally adored by his parents.

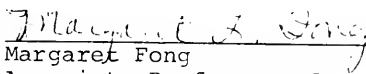
He received a bachelor of science in speech and hearing from Boston University in 1973 and worked teaching the deaf. He also received a specialist degree in counselor education from the University of Florida in 1978, having since worked in community mental health, gerontology, and private practice.

He and his family plan to return to New Hampshire to live and work in the New England dear to their hearts.


I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.


Ellen S. Amatea, Chairperson
Associate Professor of
Counselor Education

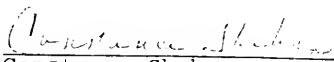
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Margaret Fong
Associate Professor of
Counselor Education

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Larry Loesch
Professor of Counselor Education

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.


Constance Shehan
Assistant Professor of Sociology

This dissertation was submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the College of Education and to the Graduate School and was accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

August 1986

David C. Smith (N)
Dean, College of Education

Dean, Graduate School

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA



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